

A S T A R I S B O R N

Musical Screenplay

by

MOSS HART

UNLESS DUPLICATED (BLUE PAGES) !!!

NO DIALOGUE CHANGES, EITHER ADDITIONS
OR DELETIONS, AND NO SET OR PRODUCTION
CHANGES ARE TO BE MADE IN THIS SCRIPT
WITHOUT THE WRITTEN APPROVAL OF
J. L. WARNER, STEVE TRILLING or T. C. WRIGHT

CAST OF CHARACTERS

- ESTHER BLODGETT. Middle twenties, petite, not really wide-eyed, but bordering on naivete. Sincere. Easily roused if her principles are questioned. The sort of person of whom people always say, when the occasion warrants, they knew she'd make it. And, also, the sort of person who doesn't change basically, when she does make it.
- NORMAN MAINE A "movie star" personified. Superlative good looks which bear more than just the mark of a photogenic face -- rather the fading evidence. To the perceptible, there is evidence of a deep inner turmoil.
- OLIVER NILES Late forties, robust, an excellent example of the latter-day successful Hollywood executive. He is cultivated, intelligent, industrious, warm, dignified. He is the antithesis of the old-time Hollywood producer so widely parodied. He is a sophisticated and able man.
- DANNY McGUIRE. Middle thirties. He is not "good-looking", but he has an easy, quiet and appealing charm. Maybe he isn't a "sharp" dresser, but everything he wears and the ways of his toilet suit him. If he is in love with Esther, it only shows in his eyes. He is an able and effortless musician. He has the charm to match his name.
- LIBBY. Early forties. He is a big man - fast with his tongue, sure of himself, expert at his work. But he is a machine. There isn't much heart or warmth here. He is not a parody of a "Hollywood Press Agent" - he is merely more intense and less aware of some of the niceties of life.

FADE IN

1. The piercing beams of huge arc lights sweep the night sky above Hollywood. They circle and crisscross in a stately minuet of their own; outlining, for a brief moment in a stream of light, the Hollywood Hills, the panorama of the city gleaming in Neon below the Hills and seeming, as they flash across the horizon, to endow the legendary landscape of Hollywood with the very magic it sends forth to the four corners of the world.

For a moment the lights come together and remain fixed in the sky -- then the CAMERA SWOOPS DOWN the beam of light and comes to rest at its source.

2. OUTSIDE A THEATRE

The lights are being manipulated for a special event, and as they SWOOP SKYWARD again they emblazon the facade of the theatre, and huge banner stretched across the front of it:

NIGHT OF STARS

HOLLYWOOD'S GALA SHOW FOR HOLLYWOOD'S OWN

MOTION PICTURE RELIEF FUND

CUT TO:

3. THE STREET OUTSIDE THE THEATRE

NIGHT

A long, sleek, limousine moving in the slow procession of long, sleek, limousines toward the entrance of the theatre. Sitting well-back in the lushly upholstered seat is Oliver Niles, -- watching the crowds of fans lining the sidewalks -- watching the milling, screeching, crowd with a polite but cynical smile on his lips.

In his late forties Oliver Niles is an excellent example of the latter-day successful Hollywood executive producer. Cultivated, intelligent, industrious, he is the antithesis of the old-time Hollywood producer so widely parodied -- this is a sophisticated and able man. Seated next to him is a lady of brilliant plumage and the unmistakable stamp of "Hollywood Starlet" written plain all over her.

(CONTINUED)

3(Cont.)

She wears a set smile of ineffable and terrible charm which widens into modest innocence as the fans lining the curb catch a glimpse of her and shriek: "It's Lola Lavery!" "Look, there's Lola Lavery!" "Hello, Lola!" "Gee, you're beautiful to-night, Lola!" "You're my favorite, Lola!" "Hi, Lola! Wave, Lola!" "How's Norman, Lola?"

The Starlet flutters her eyelids and permits herself a regal wave of the hand, as the car pulls up to the entrance of the theatre.

Oliver helps her out of the car and they move into the entrance of the theatre accompanied by more shrieks of delight from the fans, and an announcer at a microphone proclaiming:

THE ANNOUNCER:

"Lola Lavery has just arrived, folks, on the arm of Oliver Niles. Wherever Norman Maine goes these days I guess lovely little Lola is sure to be there!"

With the Starlet bowing and smiling, Oliver proceeds to the inner lobby of the theatre, where a bevy of beautiful girls in evening dress are selling programs, -- a silver band across their bosoms glitteringly announcing "Night of Stars."

As Oliver stops to smilingly purchase the programs, a man is pushing his way toward them across the crowded lobby. He is more than a little agitated and it takes more than a little something to agitate Matt Libby. His face is set in grim, hard, lines, and he shakes his head furiously once or twice, muttering to himself.

Oliver is about to hand his ticket stubs to the usher, when Libby taps him on the shoulder.

LIBBY:

Norman's not here, Oliver. No sign of him.

OLIVER:

(he turns, startled)

Didn't you pick him up at his house? That was the plan, wasn't it?

LIBBY:

Wasn't there. I've been all over town in all the usual places, -- no sign of him.

(CONTINUED)

3(Cont.1)

THE STARLET:

Oh, Norman loves being late. He's always late with me.

OLIVER:

(smiling)

You're not exactly a public performance, my dear. Know where I'm sitting, Libby?

LIBBY:

Yeah. I'll try back-stage again and let you know.

He hurries off, as Oliver hands his ticket stubs to the usher and they are taken to their box. The Overture is already being played, and they gaze down from the box at the resplendent audience.

Hollywood's Own is on display at it's most splendid. Those stars not appearing in the show are in the audience -- the men in white tie, the women beautifully gowned and jeweled -- all listening to the Overture with that fine air of benevolence reserved by hard-shelled audiences for benefits in a worthy cause.

There is a salvo of applause as the Overture finishes and the house lights dim. Then the Curtain rises on one of those time-honored acts of all benefits -- the ice-breaker act -- to let the late-comers be seated before the first star appears -- this time a bicycle act.

Oliver and the Starlet sit back in their chairs, paging through their programs, and glancing only occasionally at the stage.

CUT TO:

4.

THE STAIRCASE BACK OF THE BOX

The pin-point of an usher's flashlight is leading the way for Libby who is hurrying up the stairs.

He opens the door of the box and leans over Oliver's chair, whispering in his ear, and the following dialogue takes place with the bicycle act as a background seen over their shoulders.

LIBBY:

He's here.

OLIVER:

Good.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
4.

4(Cont.)

LIBBY:
No. He's drunk.

OLIVER:
How bad?

LIBBY:
Very. What do you want me to do?

Oliver Niles considers a moment, a look of dismay spreading across his face. Then he shakes his head reluctantly.

OLIVER:
Keep him off -- don't let him go on, Libby.

Libby hurries out of the box, as Oliver sinks low in his seat, a deep sigh escaping him.

CUT TO:

5.

BACK STAGE IN THE WINGS ON STAGE RIGHT

Norman Maine is holding forth to an admiring group of stagehands. Not a word of what he is saying is audible, for the pit orchestra of the act on stage drowns him out, but one thing is obvious even without words -- Norman Maine is gloriously, riotously drunk. He gesticulates wildly, staggers, clutches violently at a stagehand, straightens up and bows ceremoniously, then continues with his grandiloquent speech. The stagehands listen willingly -- broad grins on their faces -- for drunk though he is, there is something immensely likeable about Maine. He is every inch the movie star, but his superlative good looks bear more than just the mark of a photogenic face -- fleetingly, there is a look of deep inner turmoil. The stagehands laugh aloud now at something he is saying -- and he grins back at them delightedly.

NORMAN:
And then as Master of Ceremonies, I introduce the next act.

(he bows low and
almost keels over)

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the beauteous Sabina Colefax -- right name Sadie Kelly. Her eyelashes are long and her talent is small -- microscopic, in fact, but Sabina in a low-cut dress can look into the camera so that the eyes of the boys in the audience pop right along with the popcorn. Pop-pop, goes Sabina, -- and pop-pop goes the popcorn, and if there were no Sadie Kelly -- I beg your pardon, Sabina Colefax -- the popcorn vendors would have to invent one. And so it gives me great pleasure, ladies and gentlemen.....

6. THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE STAGE

Matt Libby has just come through the iron door from the auditorium and is beckoning to the stage manager. As the stage manager comes to him, Matt points across stage to Maine. The stage manager takes a good look at Maine, then turns an anguished face to Matt.

STAGE MANAGER:
What'll we do, Mr. Libby?

LIBBY:
What's the act that follows Maine?

STAGE MANAGER:
(glancing at a typed
list in his hand)
The Glenn Williams Orchestra.

LIBBY:
Are they here? Are they ready?

The Stage Manager nods, then hurries onto the stage to a movable bandstand where the Glenn Williams' Orchestra is leisurely setting up, and tugs at Williams' sleeve. He whispers and points in Maine's direction, explaining. Williams looks, raises his eyebrows and nods, then turns and addresses the musicians, among them a singing trio consisting of two boys and a girl. The girl is Esther Blodgett.

WILLIAMS:
Make it fast, boys -- we're on next.

A MUSICIAN:
(calling out)
Who didn't show?

ESTHER:
(calling across to the
man at the grand piano)
Regular opener? Verse and chorus, Danny?

DANNY:
That's right.
(he looks past her)
Get a load of Norman Maine, will you?

ESTHER:
(she looks off into the
wings for a moment -- then
turns back and laughs)
Mr. Maine is feeling no pain!

(CONTINUED)

6 (Cont.)

DANNY:
(feelingly)
Oh, how I hate benefits!

There is a burst of applause as the act on stage seems about to finish.

7. THE WINGS NORMAN MAINE'S SIDE OF THE STAGE

Matt Libby appears out of the darkness and taps Norman on the shoulder.

LIBBY:
Hi, Norman.

NORMAN:
(expansively -- full
of false cordiality)
Why hello, Matt, old boy! We seem to have missed each other. Been searching for me?

LIBBY:
That's all right, Norman. I knew you'd turn up.

NORMAN:
Did you, now! Touching, your faith in me, Matt -- touching.

(to the stagehands)
Mr. Libby looks after me like a fond Mother with a good sense of double-entry bookkeeping. Mr. Libby handles Public Relations at our Studio, gentlemen. How's the A.P. and the U.P. and all the little wire services, Libby?

LIBBY:
Fine, fine. Norman --

NORMAN:
How many lies you tell the public today, Libby?

LIBBY:
(smiling)
Couple of hundred. Need you for some pictures and an interview, Norman. Right now.

NORMAN:
Don't need any more pictures. Don't need any more interviews. Public loves me.

(CONTINUED)

7 (Cont.)

LIBBY:

Just a few shots, Norman -- I promised the boys.
(he links his arm through
Norman's and starts to lead
him away)

NORMAN:

Take your hands off me!

He gives Libby a hand push that sends him staggering
against a piece of scenery -- Libby just manages to save
himself from sprawling.

NORMAN:

(continuing -- grinning)
Don't make promises for me, either. I'll break
'em. Tell you what, Libby. I'm thirsty. I
need a drink before I go on. You get me a drink --
I'll take the pictures.

LIBBY:

(anything to get him
away from the stage)

Okay.

NORMAN:

(throwing an arm affectionately
across Libby's shoulders)
Two drinks -- two pictures. Three drinks -- three
pictures. You're not a bad fellow, Libby -- why
do you disgust me? Why do I hate you so, Libby!
Hmm?
(as they move off)

8. THE STAGE

The curtains are parting, and the Glenn Williams' Orchestra
is rolling down to the footlights, playing full blast.

As the bandstand reaches the footlights, Esther and the two
boys, start singing:

"You Better Have You For Me"

As they are singing the verse and first chorus:

9. A DRESSING ROOM SET UP FOR THE PRESS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

The flashbulbs are popping, and the cameras are turned on
Maine.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
8.

9 (Cont.)

NORMAN:
Okay, boys. That does it.

LIBBY:
Just a few more shots, Norman.

NORMAN:
That does it, I said.

LIBBY:
You've got plenty of time. All right no more pictures.
(he winks at the men)
Get your pencils out, boys.

NORMAN:
Sorry, gentlemen. No time.

He starts toward the door, but the men crowd around and Libby blocks his way.

LIBBY:
You've got plenty of time!
(he winks at the men)

NORMAN:
(he suddenly catches
Libby's wink in the mirror)
You trying to stop me, Libby? You trying to stop
me from going on?
(he smiles charmingly)
Is that it, Libby?

He plunges across the room to the door. One of the men tries to hold it back, but Maine hurls him aside and into a standing mirror which crashes. As the glass splinters and the others duck, shielding their faces, Maine is out and off toward the stage.

10. THE STAGE

Esther and the two boys have just launched into the second chorus of "You Better Have You For Me" but as they start the chorus, Maine suddenly appears at the right side of the stage, blinking in the light. Without a moment's hesitation, Esther steps down from the two boys, and without a break in the song, crosses swiftly to Maine. She links her arm through his, and smiles up into his face, singing all the while. Quite as if it had been rehearsed, she begins to pilot him across the stage. For a moment he looks down at her utterly and drunkenly surprised, but as a delighted ripple of applause sweeps across the footlights from the audience, he falls into step with her

(CONTINUED)

10 (Cont.)

and allows himself to be taken right across the stage to the opposite wings. As she bows him off, a real salvo of applause breaks out -- the audience sure that this is one of those little tricks of a star working into another act, always used at big benefits -- and Maine comes back and bows to her. They are bowing and smiling to each other as the applause continues, and she goes back to the bandstand and takes her place again with the trio.

DISSOLVE TO:

11. TUNNEL UNDERNEATH THE STAGE LEADING TO THE DRESSING ROOMS

Some showgirls in full regalia are rushing along up to the stage, and in the opposite direction come the members of the Williams Orchestra, carrying their instruments, their turn apparently just finished.

12. ESTHER AND DAN, THE PIANIST, AMONG THE OTHER MUSICIANS

ESTHER:

(stopping)

Wait a minute, Dan. I think I chewed off my lips wondering at what moment he might come staggering back on again.

(she opens her bag and takes out her lipstick, applying it as she talks)

My knees were shaking all the while I was singing. Was I flat? I couldn't hear a thing.

DANNY:

No, you were right on pitch all the way.

ESTHER:

It's a wonder. And it's a wonder that Norman Maine is still in the movies, isn't it?

NORMAN'S VOICE:

It is, indeed!

(he appears suddenly from around a corner

stopping them in their tracks)

In fact, I ask it myself every morning while I'm shaving -- I say, "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, tell me who's the greatest star of all!" Know what the mirror answers?

ESTHER:

(grinning)

Norman Maine?

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
10.

12 (Cont.)

NORMAN:
(drunkenly delighted)
Absolutely correct, Miss..Miss?

ESTHER:
Blodgett -- Esther Blodgett.

NORMAN:
(he stares at her
admiringly)
You must have been born with that name ---
you couldn't have made it up. No one would
make up a name like that, would they?

ESTHER:
(laughing)
No. I was born with it.

NORMAN:
(with a bow)
Allow me.
(he takes the lipstick out
of her hands and draws a
heart high up on the wall)
To mark the occasion when Esther Blodgett --
(he puts in her initials)
saved Norman Maine --
(he puts his initials under-
neath and draws an arrow
across the heart)

ESTHER:
(whispering)
There goes a brand new lipstick -- dollar and
a quarter one, too!

NORMAN:
--saved Norman Maine from making an even
more public fool of himself than usual.
(he turns back to her and returns
the lipstick with a ceremonious
bow and speaks with vast, drunken
dignity)
I thank you. My studio thanks you. The various
legions and codes that watch over our industry
will be equally pleased, I am sure. -- May I
take you to supper?
(he gestures toward Danny)
And all the people with you, too!

ESTHER:
Thank you, but we can't, Mr. Maine -- we're
working at the Grove. This is Dan McGuire,
our pianist.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
11.

12 (Cont.1)

NORMAN:

(bowing)

Bring your piano along, Mr. McGuire --
no one can object to a good, clean-living
American piano. But I insist on your taking
supper with me.

(he moves a step
closer to Danny)

Don't try to stop me, Mr. McGuire. I know
myself extremely well and I am very close to
the fighting stage at the moment -- I usually
begin to break up people and places at this
point -- if I don't get my own way!

(he smiles charmingly
at Danny)

DANNY:

(softly)

Oh, how I hate benefits -- and movie stars!

NORMAN:

(turns and smiles at Esther)

Know what I mean, Miss Blodgett?

He puts his hand lightly on her shoulder, and then lets it
play down her arm, in traditional and unmistakable fashion.

ESTHER:

(smiling back at him)

Too well, Mr. Maine. Let's have supper
later -- or tomorrow night or the next night --
I'll lay in a new supply of lipstick and
we'll celebrate all over the walls.

(she looks past him down
the corridor)

I think some friends of yours are looking for
you.

Matt Libby, Oliver Niles and the bejeweled Starlet are
approaching.

ESTHER:

(softly)

Let's skip, Dan -- while the skipping's good.

They move off as Libby, Niles and Starlet move in. At the
end of the corridor, Esther stops briefly and looks back.
The Starlet is possessively straightening out his tie, and
running a hand through his rumpled hair.

ESTHER:

Drunk or not, he's nice, isn't he?
Awfully nice...

(CONTINUED)

12 (Cont.2)

DANNY:

(sourly)

Just darling! Keep going, Esther.

He turns her around and they disappear down the corridor.

DISSOLVE TO:

13. NORMAN MAINE'S BEDROOM

Maine has been undressed and put to bed and is in deep child-like slumber. At the foot of the bed, stands Maine's manservant, in bathrobe and pajamas, observing the sleeping figure. Libby stands next to him.

MANSERVANT:

When he goes off like that, he's good for the night, Mr. Libby. He'll smile in his sleep in a minute. Like a child.

Sure enough, an untroubled, innocent smile crosses Maine's face.

LIBBY:

(watching him)

Like a child with a blow torch.

MANSERVANT:

What, sir?

LIBBY:

Nothing. Mr. Maine's charm escapes me. It always has.

He crosses to the doorway and snaps off the lights, motioning to the manservant to follow...in the doorway, he whispers something to the manservant as the figure, on the bed, stirs slightly. The manservant nods agreement, then Libby reaches into his pocket and hands the manservant Maine's car keys.

LIBBY:

Understand? Six o'clock. Sharp. Have him dressed and ready.

MANSERVANT:

Yes, sir.

LIBBY:

Hide those car keys. I've had enough of Mr. Maine for one evening.

He moves off down the corridor. The manservant watches him off, then patters down the corridor in the opposite direction.

14. MANSERVANT'S BEDROOM

The manservant yawns, then looks around for a safe place to hide the car keys. He starts to put them under the mattress, but shakes his head - obviously having been through this game with Maine many times before. He considers putting them on a slat high on the venetian blinds at the window, then thinks better of that and tries hiding them behind a picture on the wall, but they slip out. Suddenly, he smiles, struck by an entirely new idea, and quite pleased with himself, he hurries into the bathroom.

DISSOLVE TO:

15. MAINE'S BEDROOM

The figure on the bed, still with that same slight smile on his face, suddenly sits bolt upright - wide awake.

NORMAN:

(sharply)

Forgot something.

(he looks at a clock on the
bedside table -- the hands
point to half past two)

Forgot to do something. Gave my word.

(puts his hands to his
head concentrating)

Went to benefit. Made speech.

(concentrates again,
then shakes his head)

Didn't make speech. Girl saved me.

(his face lights up)

Promised to take girl to dinner. That's
it! Girl -- dinner! Gave my word.

Probably waiting. Probably crying on somebody's
shoulder.

He leaps out of bed and reaches for his clothes.

DISSOLVE TO:

16. MANSERVANT'S BEDROOM

Maine comes in on tiptoe, fully dressed, and carefully feels for the car keys under the edge of the mattress and then the pillow. He straightens up and regards the sleeping manservant.

NORMAN:

(softly)

Not playing fair, Graves, not playing fair.

(he regards him sagely)

Now, what would I do if I were a horse.

"A STAR IS BORN"

FINAL

10/7/53

14.

16 (Cont.)

Graves yawns suddenly in his sleep and turns over, but not before Maine has had a quick glimpse of the missing upper plate in his mouth.

NORMAN:

(his eyebrows going up)

Found a new place, eh?

He goes quickly into the bathroom and retrieves the car keys where they rest under the Manservant's upper plate in a glass of water. He considers a moment - then puts the plate in his pocket.

NORMAN: (Cont.)

Teach you to play fair, Graves.

He tiptoes out.

DISSOLVE TO:

17. THE EMPTY STAGE OF THE SHRINE AUDITORIUM

NIGHT

The Stage Doorman is carefully explaining to Maine -- apparently for the third or fourth time.

DOORMAN:

But there were three or four bands on the show, Mr. Maine. They all had singers. I don't know which one you mean.

NORMAN:

(sadly)

Gave my word to that girl.

(suddenly)

Got an idea!

He leaps over the footlights and walks up the aisle, lighting a match and looking under the seats until he finds a discarded program. He turns the pages quickly until he finds his own name, and then under it he reads aloud, by the light of another match, "The Glenn Williams Orchestra, now playing at the Coconut Grove." He tosses the program away, hurries back down the aisle, and leaps over the foot-lights.

DISSOLVE TO:

18. ENTRANCE OF THE COCONUT GROVE

NIGHT

There is a glimpse of the room beyond, with dancers filling the floor, and on the bandstand a rhumba band is playing. The Headwaiter is talking to Norman.

(CONTINUED)

HEADWAITER:

(shaking his head)

The Williams Orchestra finishes at one-thirty, Mr. Maine, and then the rhumba band takes over. They finished over an hour ago.

NORMAN:

It doesn't matter, Bruno.
(he laughs)

Whole thing seems silly now.

HEADWAITER:

I'll tell you something, Mr. Maine -- all the bands that work here -- the musicians, always go to a little place on Sunset after they finish at night. I hear them telling about it. Maybe the girl would be there.

(he shrugs his shoulders
expressively)

Crazy people, Mr. Maine. They blow their heads off here all night and then instead of going to bed they go to this place and blow their heads off for themselves -- for nothing. Do you wish a table?

NORMAN:

Not unless you wish to rhumba with me, Bruno. Anyone here I know?

HEADWAITER:

(peering into the room)

Let me see...A new little girl from Paramount -- over there by the palm. Very pretty, Mr. Maine.

NORMAN:

(looking)

She's with someone, isn't she?

HEADWAITER:

Only her agent. He will be glad to leave.

NORMAN:

(shaking his head)

Too young, Bruno. I had a very 'young' week, last week. Not worth it. Anyone else here?

HEADWAITER:

(hesitantly)

Miss Sheldon. Very beautiful tonight, Mr. Maine.

NORMAN:

(firmly)

No. She hit me over the head with a bottle.

(CONTINUED)

18 (Cont.1)

HEADWAITER:

(sighing)

I remember. It was right here. I thought maybe it was all right again.

NORMAN:

No. They only hit me once. Who's that lovely little girl at the table by the bandstand?

HEADWAITER:

(shaking his head)

No, Mr. Maine. Pasadena. Let it alone.

(he turns as a party of
four approaches)

Excuse me for just a moment. I will be right back.

He escorts the party down the steps toward their table. Norman lights a cigarette, leans against a palm and regards the room aimlessly through a haze of exhaling smoke.

DISSOLVE TO:

19.

INT. OF THE DOWNBEAT CLUB

NIGHT

The word "Club" is a misnomer. "Dive" would be more apt. It is a typical musician's hangout -- a place where the boys feel truly at home -- there they can play as they wish to their heart's content - not set orchestrations for smooth dancing -- but improvising, 'taking off' -- the kind of place where a new sort of music is born or a Benny Goodman or Bix Biederke emerges, full blown.

There aren't too many patrons at this hour but a number of the Williams aggregation are scattered among the tables, and on the little bandstand, a foursome of the Williams Orchestra has taken over. Dan McGuire is at the piano, the drummer behind him, and on each side of him are the clarinetist and trumpet. In front of them stands Esther. Her eyes half-closed, she begins to sing a low blues - first straight, then as she reaches the second chorus, a wild improvisation begins -- throbbing and bizarre.

Norman Maine has entered as the number began. For a moment, he stands in the doorway, listening. Then he slides into a chair at the nearest table, his eyes never leaving Esther's face, a slow look of amazement and pleasure spreading over his own. As the number finishes, the effect on him is electric -- he applauds, and walks toward Esther.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
2/17/54
17.

20. THE BANDSTAND AS THE NUMBER FINISHES

As Esther is chatting with the boys, Danny looks off and says:

DANNY:

(none too gently)

Oh, no! No!

ESTHER:

(turning)

What's the matter?

She sees Norman approaching. By shooting Esther from the same angle as we did when Norman approached her on the stage of the Shrine, we would, in a sense, have a reprise of that situation.
The band resumes playing.

DANNY:

Your dancing partner has returned.

ESTHER:

How did he ever find us here?

Danny starts toward Norman, belligerently. To forestall a situation, Esther motions Danny back to the band, and moves to Maine.

ESTHER:

Hello, Mr. Maine. You turn up in the strangest places.

NORMAN:

Don't I, though?

ESTHER:

(surprised; smiles)

And you're cold sober, too.

NORMAN:

(nods, smiling)

Better make the most of it. Here, sit down a moment.
(he sits her down at a table close to the band)

Do you always sing like that?

ESTHER:

Like what?

NORMAN:

Like you did just now.

ESTHER:

Why?

NORMAN:

I've never heard anyone sing just the way you do.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
2/17/54
18.

20 (Cont.)

ESTHER:

(laughs)

Do you mean good or bad?

The noise of the band becomes distracting. Without ceremony, Norman takes Esther by the hand and leads her out through a door. It happens to lead to the passage to the kitchen.

NORMAN:

Ever go fishing?

Esther looks a little startled.

NORMAN:

Like prizefights? Ever watch a great fighter?

Esther still doesn't catch on to what he is getting at.

NORMAN:

I'm trying to tell you how you sing.

ESTHER:

(slight laughter)

You mean like a prizefighter, or a fish?

The noise is still disturbing, so he takes her by the hand and leads her out into the parking space behind the kitchen of the Downbeat Club; parked cars, flashing Neons, traffic in the b.g.

NORMAN:

Look -- there are certain pleasures you get -- little stabs of pleasure -- when a swordfish takes the hook or you watch a great fighter get ready for the kill. See?

(he looks at her)

You don't understand a word I'm saying, do you?

ESTHER:

(feigned thoughtfulness, then:)

Not yet. Try bullfights.

NORMAN:

(excitedly)

You're joking -- but that's exactly what I mean! Listen -- if you never saw a bullfight in your life you'd know a great bullfighter the minute he stepped into the ring -- by the way he stood -- by the way he moved. Or a great dancer -- you don't have to know ballet. That little bell rings inside -- that little jolt of pleasure -- that's what happened to me just now. You're a great singer -- hasn't anyone ever told you that before?

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
2/17/54
19.

20 (Cont.1)

ESTHER:

(nicely, but guardedly)
No, Mr. Maine. And maybe you're not quite as
sober as we both think you are. But thanks, anyway.

NORMAN:

I'm sober as a judge -- and I know exactly what
I'm saying. You've got that "little something extra"
that Ellen Terry talked about.

ESTHER:

Who?

NORMAN:

Ellen Terry. Not a singer. A great actress --
long before you were born. She said that's what
star quality was -- "that little something extra."
Well, you've got it. Now, what are you doing
wasting your time singing with this band?

ESTHER:

(indignantly)

Wasting my time? Why it's taken years to get
where I am right now. I'm doing just fine,
Mr. Maine, just great!

NORMAN:

You're wasting your time! Tell me about yourself --
where do you come from? How did you start singing?
Have you got a family? Are you married?

Danny suddenly appears at the door of the cafe, with Esther's
coat over his arm.

DANNY:

We're breaking it up, Esther. You ready to
go home?

NORMAN:

(taking her coat from Danny)

Hello, Mr. McGuire. I'll see that Esther gets
home. All right, Esther?

Danny looks questioningly at Esther. She is more or less
spellbound by Maine. She vaguely consents, nodding. Norman
leads her to his parked car and helps her in.

ESTHER:

(as she is getting in the car)

I'll see you at the bus in the morning, Danny.
Goodnight.

DANNY:

(not happy)

Goodnight.

Norman drives off. Esther looks back toward Danny as they
drive out.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
2/17/54
20.

20A. PROCESS SHOT CAR DRIVING DOWN SUNSET BOULEVARD

NORMAN:

Go ahead.

ESTHER:

(recovering)

You mean you want the story of my life?

NORMAN:

I want to know about you.

ESTHER:

First time anybody said that to me, too.

(she is silent a moment, then wonderingly)

Know the only thing about myself I could think of right now? The only thing that came into my mind? The way I wash my hair!

NORMAN:

(grinning)

That's all right. Start from the top and work down.

ESTHER:

(laughing)

How about that! A chance to talk about myself and all I can think of is the way I wash my hair. I mean -- whenever something happens to me -- good or bad -- I make straight for the shampoo bottle. Now, why would I think of that now?

NORMAN:

But I understand it perfectly. It's golf balls with me. If I'm happy -- when I'm miserable -- I putt golf balls around the living room. Makes perfect sense. Go ahead.

ESTHER:

(shakes her head)

I'm afraid I'm no good at telling about myself, Mr. Maine -- it all runs together.

NORMAN:

Runs together how?

ESTHER:

All over the place! Winning a contest on radio -- singing in joints -- washing out my gloves in all these crummy hotel rooms -- see how my mind runs? Everything jumbled together!

NORMAN:

I can sort it out.

(CONTINUED)

20A (Cont.)

ESTHER:

Can you? I can't! All I can see is that first job with a band. One night stands clear across the country by bus -- putting on nail polish in the ladies room of a gas station. ~~Sleeping on a bus with my hair curlers stuck into the oboe player's ribs.~~ Waiting on tables, --

NORMAN:

~~Wait a minute -- you've lost me now.~~ Waiting on tables?

ESTHER:

Yep. Got fired and waited on tables till I could nudge my way into a singing job again. That was the low point. I'll never forget it and I'll never do it again -- no matter what. But I had to sing. Singing is -- I don't know -- somehow I feel most alive when I'm singing -- as if --
(she stops short - suddenly embarrassed)

Now, you don't want to hear all this, do you?

NORMAN:

Do you mind?

ESTHER:

Mind?

(she laughs delightedly)
I'm having a wonderful time! Oh, wait! Turn here. This is the street I live on.

20B. ANOTHER ANGLE

The car drives up to the front of the Oleander Arms, the sign of which is prominently displayed and illuminated. The car stops at the curb.

NORMAN:

Anything more I should know of your fascinating life? There must be more.

ESTHER:

There is. A whole scrapbook full.

They get out of the car, exit toward the building.

DISSOLVE TO:

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
2/17/54
21A.

21. ESTHER'S ROOM OLEANDER ARMS

Esther and Maine are sitting in the room, the door of which is open. Beyond we see the little inner patio of the Oleander Arms, with the lights of the city in the background. Esther's scrapbook is resting on Maine's knees. He is turning the last pages.

ESTHER:

(taking the scrapbook from him)

Had enough -- as the Republicans used to say?
You know as much about me now as I do myself.

He nods silently.

ESTHER:

See how long it has taken me to come this far?
Now all I need is a little luck.

Norman steps out of the door to the patio.

NORMAN:

What kind of luck?

ESTHER:

(following him - smiles)

The kind of luck every girl singer with a band dreams about -- one night a scout from one of the big record companies hears me and lets me make a record!

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
22.

21 (Cont.)

NORMAN:

And then?

ESTHER:

The record gets to be number one on the Hit Parade and on the juke boxes all over the country -- and I'm made.

(she laughs)

End of dream.

NORMAN:

There's only one thing wrong with that.

ESTHER:

I know. It might never happen.

NORMAN:

No. It might happen. Only the dream isn't big enough. How long will you be playing at the Grove?

ESTHER:

Tonight was our last night. We leave for San Francisco in the morning.

NORMAN:

(quietly)

Don't go.

ESTHER:

Huh?

NORMAN:

Quit. Leave the band. Stay on here. Let me see what I can do for you at the studio. I'll talk to Oliver Niles right away. It's just a chance, but take it!

ESTHER:

Chance? Why, I'd be tossing away everything I've worked for!

NORMAN:

That's right. But it's served its purpose. Listen to me, Esther -- a career is a curious thing. Talent isn't always enough. You need a sense of timing -- an eye for seeing the turning point -- or recognizing the big chance when it comes and grabbing it. A career can rest on a trifle. Like tonight. Us -- sitting here. Or it can turn on somebody seeing something in you that nobody else ever saw -- and saying, "You're better than that -- you're better than you know. Don't settle for the little dream -- go on to the big one."

(CONTINUED)

21 (Cont.1)

NORMAN: (Cont.)
(he puts his hands on her shoulders
and turns her toward him)
Scared? Scared to take the plunge?

ESTHER:
Yes.
(she looks up at him)
What makes you so sure -- about me?

NORMAN:
(simply)
I heard you sing.

ESTHER:
But --

NORMAN:
I know. Just my word. But you know it, too,
don't you? You just needed somebody to tell
you.

ESTHER:
(she passes her hand across
her forehead)
I'm all mixed up now. I thought I was doing just
great --

NORMAN:
(gently)
Don't look so miserable. You don't have to
decide this minute. Sleep on it. I'll call
you first thing in the morning.

ESTHER:
Sleep on it! You've fixed me for sleep
tonight!

NORMAN:
(he raises her face to his
and looks deep into her eyes)
Whether you do it or not -- don't ever forget
how good you are. Hang on to that. Because I'm
right.
(he presses his hands over
hers)
Good night, Esther.

ESTHER:
(tremulously)
Good night, Mr. Maine. And -- and thank
you.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
1/25/54
24.

21 (Cont. 2)

He gets up and goes toward his car. Then he stops and turns to her.

NORMAN:

Hey!

ESTHER:

What is it?

NEW BUSINESS
DIALOGUE

NORMAN:

Nothing, - I just want to take another look at you.

DISSOLVE TO:

22. MAINE'S BEDROOM

EARLY MORNING

He sits on the edge of the bed dialing a number. As he listens for the ring, he opens the bedside table drawer and pours himself a drink of straight Scotch, almost as a reflex action.

DISSOLVE TO:

23. OLIVER NILES' BEDROOM

EARLY MORNING

Oliver Niles is sound asleep, the clock on his bedside table pointing to four-thirty. The telephone rings insistently, piercing his slumber and finally forcing him awake.

(CONTINUED)

23 (Cont.)

OLIVER:

(groaning, as he reaches for a pillow and puts it over his head, then as the telephone continues to ring, he puts out an arm and takes it)

Hello. What is it? Who?

(he sits bolt upright in bed - suddenly wide awake)

Norman! What's happened? Are you in jail? What have you done?

(as he listens, an expression of relief comes over his face)

Ohh!

(he sinks back on the pillow, his ear to the receiver)

You heard a girl sing! Well, isn't that nice. Do you know what time it is? Yes, I heard you -- you heard a girl sing. What do you want me to do -- applaud? Yes, yes! I heard you! Every word! Yes. Anything! Anything! Yes!

DISSOLVE TO:

24. MAINE'S BEDROOM

EARLY MORNING

NORMAN:

Thanks, Oliver. Go on back to sleep -- I want you nice and fresh in the morning when I bring her around.

He hangs up, very pleased with himself. Again, almost as a reflex action, his hand reaches out and he refills the glass with Scotch -- this is a man who drinks happy or unhappy, as if to satisfy some inner strange necessity.

NORMAN:

(as he lifts the glass to his lips he begins to hum the refrain of the number Esther sang at the Downbeat Club -- hums it as a kind of toast to her)

DISSOLVE TO:

25. ESTHER'S ROOM AT THE OLEANDER ARMS

She is in bed, but sitting up, wide awake, obviously unable to sleep with excitement. With a sudden resolve, she tosses off the covers, and puts on her robe. Then, quickly, she

(CONTINUED)

25 (Cont.)

goes out of the room and down the corridor; a corridor which stretches along a long outdoor sun-porch, with the rooms leading off it.

DISSOLVE TO:

26. DANNY'S BEDROOM

Danny is in the bed, asleep. There is a knocking at the door.

DANNY:
(sleepily)
Who is it?

ESTHER:
(outside the door)
It's me. You asleep, Danny?

DANNY:
(grumpily)
Not any more. What's the matter?

ESTHER:
(coming in)
I'm sorry -- I had to see you.

DANNY:
Something wrong? Hand me a cigarette.

ESTHER:
(she hands him one -
then)
I'm quitting the band, Danny -- I'm not going on to 'Frisco tomorrow.

DANNY:
(stopping the match in
mid-air)
You crazy or something?

ESTHER:
Maybe. But I'm quitting.

DANNY:
Why? What happened?

ESTHER:
Norman Maine is getting me a screen test.

DANNY:
Oh, go on back to bed, Esther!

(CONTINUED)

10/7/53
27.

26 (Cont.)

ESTHER:

It's true.

DANNY:

(looks at her suspiciously) .
You been drinking with him?

ESTHER:

Of course not.

DANNY:

Then I'll take you to a doctor in 'Frisco
and have your head examined. What's the
matter with you, Esther? He was making a
conventional pass, that's all.

ESTHER:

It wasn't that, Danny -- if it was that, I'd
have known it right away.

DANNY:

What else is it, then? He just follows bands
around and gives singers screen tests? What's
got into you?

ESTHER:

(softly)

He gave me a look at myself I've never had
before. He saw something in me no one else
ever did -- and he made me see it, too -- made
me believe it.

DANNY:

Believe what? It's taken all these years for
you to get with a big-name outfit like this --
you going to toss it all into the ashcan? For
what?

ESTHER:

For a chance to be something bigger than I ever
thought of being. And I won't turn back now --
ever!

(she leans over and kisses him)

Don't be mad at me, Danny. I'll be up to see
you off in the morning.

DANNY:

(gruffly)

How much money you got, Esther?

ESTHER:

A little. Enough for a couple of weeks.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
28.

26 (Cont.1)

DANNY:

You'll be signed up and in front of the
cameras by then, eh? Oh, you fool! You fool!

ESTHER:

You think so? Then why do I feel this way?
Got a special pink cloud of my own today, Danny!

She sails out of the room, and out onto the sun-porch.
Suddenly, she stops dead. In the quickening dawn, the
morning sky is full of pink clouds. She looks up to the
sky and laughs in quiet happiness.

FADE OUT.

10/7/53
29.

FADE IN

27. MAINE'S BEDROOM

EARLY MORNING

The manservant is helping Maine struggle into his clothes. It is a painful process. Maine is in the throes of a gigantic hangover. His eyes are closed and he groans as he submits to each garment being put on. The manservant stops only to let him down a Bromo-Seltzer, then ties his tie for him, pushes him into his coat, and leads him out of the room.

DISSOLVE TO:

28. OUTSIDE MAINE'S HOUSE

A studio car waits at the curb, and the driver and another man are putting Maine's bags into the luggage compartment as the manservant emerges, still leading Maine. Without a word, the manservant bundles Maine into the car, where he immediately falls asleep with a deep, grateful sigh.

THE DRIVER:

(coming around and peering
in at Maine)

In his usual wonderful shape, eh?

MANSERVANT:

He'll sleep it off on the plane. Any idea how long you'll be gone?

THE DRIVER:

Five or six weeks at least. This one's being shot mostly on location. Big sea epic. He won't see anything for a long time but the stuff he hates - water. S'long!

He gets into the car and in a moment it is gone.

DISSOLVE TO:

29. OUTSIDE THE OLEANDER ARMS

EARLY MORNING

The musicians who live at the Arms are piling out sleepily and into their cars, instruments under their arms. Esther stands on the steps in slippers and bathrobe, waving good-bye. Danny emerges from the house.

DANNY:

(gruffly)

'Bye.

ESTHER:

Wait a minute, Danny. Wish me luck.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
30.

29 (Cont.)

DANNY:
(laconically)
Luck.

He starts to speak -- then stops.

ESTHER:
Go ahead -- say it.

DANNY:
No. No use. You're going for the ride.
(his face breaks into an un-
accustomed smile and he leans
over and kisses her gingerly
on the forehead)
Okay, Esther -- good luck.
(he hurries down the steps,
then calls back over his
shoulder)
Don't forget who makes better vocal arrange-
ments for you than anybody else in the world!

She watches him pile into the car and drive off, and for a moment just stands on the steps, shivering slightly. Her face clouds -- suddenly the enormity of what she has done seems to come over her. Then she shakes her head, smiles and resolutely goes back into the house.

DISSOLVE TO:

30. ESTHER'S BEDROOM

MORNING

As she comes in the door. She stands irresolutely in the middle of the room, then steals a glance at the clock on the bed table. The hands point to eight o'clock.

ESTHER:
(softly)
Too early for him to call yet.

She goes to the closet, opens the door and surveys her clothes, finally picking out her prettiest dress to wear. Then running her hand casually through her hair, she goes to the washstand and opens a bottle of hair shampoo and pours it over her head. As the soapsuds begin to form, she looks happily at herself in the mirror and begins to hum the song she sang at the Downbeat.

DISSOLVE TO:

31. ESTHER

Her wet hair over her shoulders, she sits on the far steps of the bungalow, fluffing out her hair and glancing at the telephone -- waiting for it to ring. After a moment, the

31 (Cont.)

center of the screen FADES IN to Scene 32, and Scene 32 is played with Esther still in sight at the far side of the screen. This is an idea for a Technical use of the wide-screen. At the end of Scene 32, the center of the screen FADES OUT and Esther is alone, still waiting as at the beginning of Scene 31.

FADE IN

32. A FISHING BOAT IN THE OPEN SEA

THE CAMERAS are set up aft, and the director is intently watching an actor pull a man up from the sea and over the side of the boat. The man being hauled out of the sea is Maine.

THE DIRECTOR:

Fine, wrap it up. That was it, Norman.

Maine, dripping and shivering, allows a blanket to be placed around his shoulders and reaches for a thermos of steaming coffee, but before he drinks it, he calls out.

NORMAN:

Eddie! Eddie! Any luck?

THE DIRECTOR:

Drink that coffee and change your clothes,
Norman -- you can talk to Eddie later!

NORMAN:

(paying no attention
as Eddie approaches)

Did you find it, Eddie?

EDDIE:

(shaking his head - he gestures
to the telephone directory
under his arm)

Mr. Maine, there are about three hundred bungalow
courts along Highland and Sunset -- can't you
remember the number or even the name of it?

NORMAN:

(angrily)

I just remember the neighborhood! Go ahead,
Eddie! Sit down with that phone book and call
up all three hundred!

(his teeth chattering, he
brings the coffee to his lips)

THE CAMERAMAN:

(to the director)

What's with this phone book routine?

32 (Cont.)

THE DIRECTOR:

The usual. Some dame. Norman, go on down and get dry, will you? I need you for the cabin shot.

NORMAN:

(calling back as he moves off to the cabin)
Hey, Eddie! It had the name of a flower on the sign -- oisetta or zinnia or something. Get the studio and have someone take a car and cruise around there for two days, if necessary! But find that place!

DISSOLVE TO:

33. INT. OF A DOWN-AT-THE-HEELS NIGHT CLUB MID-AFTERNOON

It is mid-afternoon and the daylight is filtering in and makes the room even more grimy and tawdry. The tables are turned up on end, and a middle-aged man, evidently the proprietor, sits on a chair in the middle of the floor.

THE PROPRIETOR:

You sing fine, honey, but the trouble is business is so punk right now, I'm thinking of waiting on tables myself. Tell you what -- why don't you drop by Friday night late and just go on -- let's see what happens. Can't pay you anything, but I'll give you your dinner.

ESTHER:

Thanks. It's the best offer I've had today, anyway. Depends on how hungry I get by Friday.

She smiles at him and starts out. She is dressed in what is obviously her "audition clothes" -- to make the best possible impression, but they are completely out of hay in the harsh light of day. The black satin suit looks merely pathetic.

34. OLIVER NILES' OFFICE

Oliver Niles is talking intently into the telephone. Matt Libby is slouched down in a chair, listening -- a half smile on his face.

OLIVER:

(he listens -- then shouts into receiver)
Four days! You're behind schedule now, Bob! Is Maine drunk? Tell me the truth -- don't cover for him, Bob -- I want to know!

(he listens)

Oh. Well, what did the Doctor say today? Okay. We'll shoot around him, and try and make up the time as soon as he's up. Cut some corners, Bob -- you've got to bring it in on time. You know how tough things are now -- they're on my neck from New York every day. Okay, I understand.

(he hangs up and looks at Libby)
What's so amusing?

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
33.

34(Cont.)

LIBBY:

Maine sick?

OLIVER:

Bad case of flu. Hundred and three temperature. Kept him in the water too long, I'll bet. Nobody uses their heads -- they'll run 'way over schedule now.

LIBBY:

(chuckling)

Water would have a bad effect on him. Well, at least you've got a different excuse to give the stockholders this time -- water, instead of Scotch.

Oliver looks up at him for a moment -- unsmiling, then:

OLIVER:

Let's see the layout for the Stanton picture, Libby.

Libby leisurely picks up a large layout from the floor beside him and moves toward the desk.

DISSOLVE TO:

35.

ESTHER'S NEW LODGINGS EXT. OF STREET

She has evidently moved several times since the Oleander Arms and the street is a mute and unspoken symbol of the low state of her finances at the moment. It is the epitomy of shabbiness. She is walking toward the bungalow, her face tired, her shoulders drooped. A woman's voice calls out from the steps as she approaches and passes her.

WOMAN'S VOICE:

Somebody called you about a job -- says to call 'em right back. Number's on the pad by the phone.

Esther turns and almost runs into the house and down the hall to the pay phone, her face lighting up. She takes out a coin from her pocketbook, kisses it for luck and drops it into the slot and dials.

ESTHER:

Mr. Blake, please. Esther Blodgett.
(she waits)

Hello, Mr. Blake. Yes.
(excitedly)

Singing? Yes. Yes. On the set at nine.

She hangs up the phone and leans against the phone box, a long sigh of relief escaping her.

DISSOLVE TO:

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/7/53
34.

36. LARGE LOFT WHICH HAS BEEN TURNED INTO A SOUND STAGE

It is primitive in the extreme and quite cluttered and dirty. The CAMERA and crew are ready - the lights come on. The Director fusses at the camera for a moment - then turns.

DIRECTOR:

All right. Let's take it.

He gestures toward Esther. She starts to sing as the CAMERA rolls right on past her to an odd-looking puppet whose mouth is manipulated by wires to open and shut as if the song were issuing from him. Esther just stands to one side, utterly unnoticed singing the commercial for the puppet.

ESTHER:

(singing)

If you are a woman who is a wife
And you want to keep your husband for all your life
There is one inevitable thing you must do
Use Trinidad Cocoanut Oil Shampoo.
It's very nice
It's a bargain at double the price.
Try it and you'll find as long as you live
Your crowning glory will be most attractive
If you want to be a girl that the men run to
Use Trinidad Cocoanut Oil Shampoo.
Take my advice
It's a bargain at double the price.

DIRECTOR'S VOICE:

Okay -- Cut!

DISSOLVE TO:

37. A RESTAURANT DRIVE IN

Some cars already parked, and the occupants are eating from the trays latched on to the side of the cars. Other cars are driving up, waitresses with menus coming toward them as they pull to a stop. It is a large, busy place. As still another car drives up and stops, a waitress approaches. The waitress is Esther, and her face is a fine combination of humiliation and bitter determination. This is the low point -- a bitter return to a state she thought never to find herself in again.

THE MAN IN THE CAR:

(cheerfully)

What's good to eat today?

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/7/53
34A.

37 (Cont.)

ESTHER:

(she grits her teeth,
then winds up and plunges)
Cheeseburgers, Nutburgers, Bananaburgers,
Chickenburgers, Tunaburgers, Lobsterburgers,
Chop-Suey-burgers, and our Super-Duper,
Superburger.

THE MAN IN THE CAR:

What's in that?

ESTHER:

Everything we've got in the place --
all burgered!

DISSOLVE TO:

38. A TELEPHONE BOOTH IN THE LOBBY OF A FASHIONABLE HOTEL
Danny McGuire is talking into the phone.

DANNY:

I'm gonna talk quick, Esther -- we took a five minute break -- I've got to get back. Listen -- I've squared it with Williams. He'll take you back. I'll wire you the dough for the fare and you can join us in Cleveland. Give me that address again.

(he takes out a pencil and the envelope from his pocket -- then his expression changes as he listens)

I don't get it!

(he stops briefly, to control himself, then)
Do you know what the odds are against you? a hundred thousand to one! Can you hear me? A hundred thousand to one!

39. ESTHER AT THE PAY TELEPHONE IN THE ROOMING HOUSE

ESTHER:

(slowly)

I know, Danny. But maybe I'm that one.

DISSOLVE TO:

40. THE OLEANDER ARMS
(THE BUNGALOW COURT WHERE ESTHER AND NORMAN SAT ON THE STEPS)

Norman Maine's car is again parked at the curb, and he, himself, is standing on the steps, talking to a formidable woman who is obviously the landlady.

NORMAN:

You haven't any idea? You Haven't the faintest idea of where she might have gone from here?

THE LANDLADY:

I've told you, sir -- I've told you three times -- that when people can't afford the moderate rates we charge --

NORMAN:

(cutting her short)

Yes, yes. Thank you. Thank you so very much.

He turns and comes down the steps to his car. He gets in, but turns to look back at the sign.

NORMAN:

(growling)

Oleander Arms! No wonder I couldn't remember it!

(calls out wrathfully to the landlady)

Why don't you call your place something sensible like --

(CONTINUED)

40 (Cont.)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/11/53
36-36A.

What?

THE LANDLADY:

NORMAN:

Oh, never mind! I'll bet you never saw an oleander
in your life!
(he jams his foot on the gas)

DISSOLVE TO:

41. INT. NORMAN MAINE SITTING ROOM

DAY

Norman, on a sofa, is moodily sipping a drink. The STARLET in a bathing suit comes in from the terrace, removing her bathing cap and fluffing her hair.

STARLET:

Come on out by the pool, Normie, you can't just sit here on a lovely day like this?

NORMAN:

Why can't I?

The Starlet is not happy with Norman's mood. As she chatters away, the Shampoo Commercial appears on the television screen in the b.g.

STARLET:

Normie, is something the matter - have I offended you in some way? If I have I'm terribly sorry...
(a little nervously)

I did absolutely nothing while you were away. I was such a good girl! Because all the while you were gone, I kept remembering what you promised.

NORMAN:

(staring gloomily into his drink)
What did I promise - blue mink or white mink? Or have they done something else to those poor minks while I was gone?

THE STARLET:

Normie! It's not presents I want...
(she lowers her eyes)

It's you, Normie - just you and I alone. Don't you remember - you promised we'd go to Honolulu just as soon as you finished the picture? What's the matter with you, Normie? You're not even listening!

The Trinidad Commercial is over. Something else is on the T.V. screen.

NORMAN:

Who was that singing just now?

STARLET:

Singing?

NORMAN:

Yes. Someone was singing while you were talking a minute ago.

STARLET:

Oh, just one of those singing commercials. And of course, if we go to Honolulu...

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/11/53
37.

41 (Cont.)

He swings around in his chair and stares at the screen but the Shampoo Commercial has been replaced by a Ladies' Gym Class. He stares at the television screen for a moment more -- then without turning back, he starts out.

THE STARLET:

Normie! Where are you going? Normie!

DISSOLVE TO:

42. ESTHER'S BEDROOM

Esther stands at the rather battered washstand, washing out a pair of white gloves, some stockings and a couple of handkerchiefs. She wrings them out, sticks the wet handkerchiefs on the mirror, hangs the stockings over the window-sill and walks tiredly over to the bed. A dress is laid out on it, and beside it some buttons and a needle and thread. She grunts, turns away, and walks aimlessly back to the window, and stands staring out for a long moment. Then she turns back to the washstand, and reaches for a shampoo bottle on the shelf. Almost as a reflex-action, she pours the liquid over her hair and begins to lather it.

43. THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE ROOMING HOUSE

A sleek convertible comes to a grinding stop in front of the house, and Norman leaps out. The CAMERA FOLLOWS him as he walks quickly to the steps and accosts a woman sweeping them. She gestures "upstairs" and as he brushes past her and dashes into the house, a look of recognition and surprise crosses her face and she drops the broom hastily. She hurries to a window on the ground floor and bangs on the screen.

THE WOMAN:

Mrs. Barker! Hey, Mrs. Barker! Open the window!
Come on out! Who do you think just went upstairs!

44. THE HALL IN FRONT OF ESTHER'S BEDROOM

Norman is knocking on the door. He knocks gently at first -- then more loudly. There is no answer from inside. He turns the knob and opens the door. He looks inside, then comes into the room. It is empty. He looks around and stands irresolute for a moment -- then leaves the room and makes for the stairs.

45. THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE

A little group of women have congregated and are talking excitedly, looking up at the house, and quite a knot of kids are at the curb, admiring the convertible. As Norman comes out and approaches the women --

46. THE ROOF OF THE HOUSE

It is a grimy tar-papered place, with two very old army cots placed against the edge of the roof for sunning. Esther is sitting on one, her shoulders bare, a towel clasped around her middle, the other hand running through her wet hair and drying it out. She goes about the business of fluffing out her hair for a moment and then stops, listening -- conscious of some untoward excitement of the roof to investigate and look down.

47. THE STREET BELOW FROM ESTHER'S ANGLE ON THE ROOF

Norman is pushing the kids away from the car, none too gently, and is just about to get in, when Esther calls out from the roof.

ESTHER:

Hey! Hey!!

He stops, startled -- then looks up toward the roof. He leaps out of the car, pushes through the kids and women and runs back into the house.

48. THE ROOF AS NORMAN EMERGES THROUGH THE DOOR

They stand looking at each other for a brief moment. Then:

ESTHER:

(dolefully)

Oh, I look so terrible!

(her hands go frantically to her head,
and she clutches the towel around her)

NORMAN:

Never mind how you look -- listen to me. I was shanghaied away. Location. I tried -- believe me, I tried to --

(there is a loud toot from below. He
rushes to the edge of the roof and calls down)
Get away from that car! I'll beat your brains out
when I get down there! Get away!

ESTHER:

You would have to turn up when I look like this --
it's just like you!

NORMAN:

(angrily)

I don't care how you look! You look awful! Does
that satisfy you? Did you hear what I said?

(again he runs to the edge at a
loud noise below)

Leave those hub-caps alone, you rats! Take your
dirty hands off that leather - you hear me!

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

He turns back to Esther just as a delegation appears on the roof. Several women, with a couple of dirty-faced little girls in tow are smiling idiotically at him. A few of them are armed with Brownie cameras, and one or two have pieces of paper and pencils in their hands for autographs.

1ST WOMAN:

Would you take a picture with my little Sandra, Mr. Maine?

NORMAN:

No! Just leave me alone!

2ND WOMAN:

Could I have your autograph for my cousin, Mr. Maine?

NORMAN:

No! Did you hear what I said? NO! Disappear, will you. This is private!

(he turns back to Esther)

Then I got sick, and the minute I got back, I went straight to --

1ST WOMAN:

(loudly)

Go and stand by the man, Sandra -- I'll get the picture. Who does he think he is -- the President or something? Go ahead, Sandra.

(she gives the little girl a good push, and the child wails)

NORMAN:

(shouting)

I told you this was private, didn't I. Now - you want me to break that camera?

(another loud toot from the street

- he runs to the edge)

Get away from that car! I'm gonna come down there and kick your brains out! Leave that wheel alone!

1ST WOMAN:

Bust my camera! You got some nerve coming around here yelling at our kids! We live here!

ANOTHER WOMAN:

Just because they're a movie star they think they can order people around!

STILL ANOTHER WOMAN:

This is the United States of America, Mr. Norman Maine, and my husband was in two wars --

ESTHER:

Please, ladies, please! Mr. Maine will pose for the picture downstairs. I know he will. Honest!

(CONTINUED)

48 (Cont.1)

NORMAN:

(still yelling)

Yes, yes! I'll sign all the autographs you want!
I'll pose with Sandra on my knee or on my head!
Just give us a couple of minutes alone!

1ST WOMAN:

Well, why didn't you say so 'then in the first place?
(as they start out)
Can I send your Jimmy to the drugstore for some more
film, Mrs. Barker? I only got two rolls left.

There is a little silence as they stand facing each other after
the women have gone. Then:

NORMAN:

Esther --

She comes over and puts a hand on his mouth.

ESTHER:

Not now.

(she makes a gesture that takes in the
surroundings and the noise from the
street below)

This is all so --
(she giggles)
terrible!

NORMAN:

All right.

(he looks at her keenly)

You look like you could stand a good dinner.

ESTHER:

I've got a flash for you -- I could. And in a place
with tablecloths.

NORMAN:

Fine. What about a drive down to the beach - we'll
stop on the way for a nutburger -- and then have
a late supper.

She looks up at him a little wild-eyed -- then explodes into
laughter -- helpless, hysterical laughter.

NORMAN:

What's the matter?

She tries to answer, but cannot. She sinks onto the army cot,
shaken by a convulsive laughter that is a mixture of hysteria
and relief.

NORMAN:

Esther, what is it? What's the matter with you?
(he takes her by the shoulders
and shakes her)

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/9/53
41.

48 (Cont. 2)

ESTHER:

(trying hard to control herself)
Nothing - nothing. Sure - let's have a nutburger!
Only I'm going to order three super-duper burgers
and throw 'em all over the place!
(she covers her face with her hands,
shaking again with laughter)

DISSOLVE TO:

49.

MAKEUP DEPARTMENT AT THE NILES STUDIO

It is about six o'clock in the morning, and Esther is seated in a chair, her head turbaned in a towel, staring at the backs of three makeup men. She sits there, woebegone, like a lump of flesh, and the three makeup men stare back at her, their faces grim - then they turn away and whisper again, their heads close together.

1ST MAKEUP MAN:

It's the nose. The nose is the problem.

2ND MAKEUP MAN:

Maybe a corrective in the nostril, Mr. Ettinger?

1ST MAKEUP MAN:

No.

(he shakes his head and sighs)

ESTHER:

Could I just...

3RD MAKEUP MAN:

(raising a hand for silence)

Please, little lady! Mr. Ettinger is thinking. It's six o'clock in the morning - just the time for one of his miracles.

She sinks back, thoroughly cowed, trying to twist around and get a glimpse of her face in the mirror, and overhear what they are saying.

2ND MAKEUP MAN:

You think maybe the Dietrich eyebrows?

1ST MAKEUP MAN:

No. The nose is still the problem.

3RD MAKEUP MAN:

Suppose we try the Crawford mouth - take the attention away from the nose.

1ST MAKEUP MAN:

No -- No!

(he sighs)

You think maybe a hair job --?

The other two nod sagely and they all put their heads together, whispering and gesticulating. Esther stares at them numbly -- looking like what she feels -- a lump of flesh.

DISSOLVE TO:

DIALOGUE
CHANGE

DIALOGUE
CHANGE

0. NORMAN MAINE'S CAR COMING THROUGH THE STUDIO GATE

He parks the car and leaps out, heading for a small building marked "Makeup Dept." As he trots toward it at a hurried pace, the door of the building opens and Esther emerges. She wears a blonde wig, her face is utterly different from the one she went in with, and she doesn't remotely resemble herself, but it is Esther, nevertheless. As he passes her, she calls out to him.

ESTHER:

Mr. Maine!

NORMAN:

(barely taking the time to call back
over his shoulder)

Sorry, honey -- I'm late for an appointment.

ESTHER:

Mr. Maine...!

NORMAN:

Catch me in the commissary later, honey!

ESTHER:

(her voice rising)

But, Mr. Maine...!

He stops dead. The voice has penetrated. He turns around and stares. Then slowly he approaches her, still staring.

NORMAN:

(as he reaches her side for a full look)

Oh, no! No!

ESTHER:

What's the matter with it?

He shakes his head, unable to speak, laughter beginning to convulse him.

ESTHER:

(furiously)

That's right -- laugh! Laugh your head off! I've been sitting in that...

(she grits her teeth)

chair since six o'clock this morning!

NORMAN:

You sat an hour too long, my dear. Come on!

He takes her by the hand and leads her down the studio street, keeping his head averted, not daring to look at her, for fear of breaking into laughter, and stops in front of some small bungalows -- evidently star dressing rooms. On one of the bungalow doors is a sign, "Norman Maine." He takes out a key and opens the door, bowing her in, but still not daring to look her straight in the face.

DISSOLVE TO:

51. INT. MAINE'S DRESSING ROOM

NORMAN:

Sit down there.

(he places her in a chair in front of a large mirror and snaps on the lights around it)

First things first!

(with a yank, he pulls off the wig)

Now take every bit of that junk off your face.

ESTHER:

But my nose is bad, and my eyes are wrong and my ears are too big and I've got no chin!

NORMAN:

I know. Take it all off, and just put on your eye-brows and lipstick the way you always do -- I'll do the rest. Come on -- you've got to be made up and ready to shoot that test by nine.

(he takes a large dab of cold cream and smears it over her face)

ESTHER:

But, Mr. Maine....!

NORMAN:

I think at this critical moment you can call me Norman.

ESTHER:

Oh, Norman -- what's the difference how I sing, if my face is so awful?

NORMAN:

Your face is just dandy. Come on -- wipe it off!

He hands her a towel, and as she begins to wipe the cream off her face -

DISSOLVE TO:

52. ESTHER LOOKING LIKE HERSELF AGAIN

Norman is standing off for one final look. He nods his head, satisfied - then takes a powder puff and gives a final dab to her forehead.

NORMAN:

(offering his arm)

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more..
(reaches for his robe)

Throw this across your shoulders -- you're shivering.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
10/20/53
44.

52 (Cont.)

ESTHER:

(she takes his arm, but as they reach
the door she hangs back)

Norman -- I've got the willies! I'm scared stiff!
I couldn't sing a note! Listen -- nothing comes
out!

(she opens her mouth to demonstrate)
Nothing comes out!

NORMAN:

Of course you're scared! We all are. What makes
you think you wouldn't be? Look -- forget about
the camera -- it's the Downbeat Club at three
o'clock in the morning--and you're singing for
yourself and the boys in the band --mainly your-
self-- the way I heard you. Just keep that picture
in your mind--and if that doesn't do it-- think
of a man in a car eating a nutburger.

ESTHER:

(laughing in spite of herself)
That did it! That did it fine!

They walk out of the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

53. THE STUDIO

DAY

Esther comes through a turnstile and pauses uncertainly in
front of a building with an iron staircase to a second floor
balcony which divides and runs around both sides of the
building. She looks up at the sign on the building --
"Publicity" -- pats her hair into place, clutches the scrap
book she carries under her arm a little more firmly, and
then marches up the iron staircase and enters the door at
the top.

54. INT. ENTRANCE HALLWAY PUBLICITY BUILDING

as Esther comes in. It is a mass of glass partitions and a
beehive of activity. Esther locates a door marked "Miss
Markham", and enters.

54A. INT. MISS MARKHAM'S OFFICE

When Esther enters, Miss Markham is standing by a desk looking
over some layouts, a cigarette dangling from the end of her
lips. Esther advances tentatively.

ESTHER:

Miss Markham?

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
10/20/53
45.

54A (Cont.)

MISS MARKHAM:

Yes?

ESTHER:

I was told to see you. I'm Esther Blodgett.

Miss Markham's manner changes. She looks at Esther as if saying, "So, you're the one." But instead she says--

MISS MARKHAM:

Oh, yes...I expected a blonde, I don't know why. Just signed a contract with us, eh?

ESTHER:

Yes.

MISS MARKHAM:

Good, good. Glad to have you with us. We'll have to get what you've done so far, where you came from, etceters, etcetera.

ESTHER:

(holding it out)

I brought my scrap book along, and I can --

MISS MARKHAM:

Thanks, dear. Very helpful. Have to turn you over to Miss Fusselow of fashions -- this layout has to get right out to three magazines.

(she sweeps past Esther)

Just come along, dear...Glad to have you with us...

54B.

THE HALLWAY

Esther follows more slowly as Miss Markham crosses the hallway and goes through the swinging gate in a low railing, behind which is a sort of secretaries' nest with partitioned offices on either side.

MISS MARKHAM:

(calling as she goes)

Ann! Ann Fusselow!...Take care of this for me, will you? New contract player!

Just after Miss Markham has called her name the second time, Miss Fusselow comes out of one of the offices, her arms overflowing with dresses and mink coats. She looks questioningly at Esther who stops without going through the gate.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
10/20/53
46.

54-C. REVERSE ANGLE ESTHER IN B.G.

NEW
SCENE

When Miss Markham finishes her last line, she sweeps past Ann Fusselow, adding out of the side of her mouth something that sounds like, "The Norman Maine girl."

54-D. ANOTHER ANGLE

Miss Markham disappears into an office with her layouts, and Miss Fusselow advances brightly on Esther.

NEW
SCENE

MISS FUSSELOW:

Hello, honey -- glad to have you with us!
Soon as we get some background, I'll get
some fashion stuff out on you.

ESTHER:

I brought my scrap book along, and I can --

MISS FUSSELOW:

Not now, honey -- I've got to get these dresses
right down to photo...

(starting down hallway)

Come along, honey....

Esther follows Miss Fusselow into a photo gallery at the end
of the hall.

54-E. INT. PHOTO GALLERY

Miss Fusselow sweeps in with her load, followed by Esther with
her scrap book.

NEW
SCENE

MISS FUSSELOW:

Tell you what, honey, I'll get with you sometime
next week when I'm in the clear. Why don't you
go right in and see Mr. Libby -- he's head of
the department...Glad you're with us, honey...

She has nodded vaguely toward a door, and now disappears her-
self through another one. Esther stands looking around a
little bewildered. Then she locates a door labelled: MATT
LIBBY, and without knocking, opens it and enters.

54-F. INT. MATT LIBBY'S OFFICE

Matt Libby is also standing at his desk and peering down at
papers. He pays no attention whatever to Esther when she comes
in. Finally -

ESTHER:

I'm Esther Blodgett, Mr. Libby. Miss Fusselow
told me to come in here to...

NEW
SCENE

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
10/20/53
46A.

54-F (Cont.)

LIBBY:
(still not looking up)
Uh-huh. Glad to have you with us.

ESTHER:
(gamely)
It's certainly a thrill to be here, too...
(in her keyed up state finds herself
going on against her better judgment)
I brought my scrap book along, and if you want
to know about me -- what I've done and all
that -- we can go over it and I can...

Trails off, realizing she's making a bit of a fool of herself -
that neither he nor anyone else in the department is actually
interested in her.

LIBBY:
Uh-huh.
(looks her over for the first time)
Want to say 'hello' to the big boss? It's
the usual procedure.

ESTHER:
Oh?

LIBBY:
Come on, I'll take you over to him...May be
the only chance you'll ever get to see him...

He opens a door to what appears to be a balcony, and goes out.
Again Esther finds herself tagging along.

54-G. EXT. CATWALK

NEW
SCENE
which connects two buildings. It is narrow, and with the ex-
ception of two railings, is open on each side. One end leads
directly into Libby's office... He comes out and strides
across ahead of Esther, who, when she sees where she is, stops
abruptly, the unexpectedness of the sheer drop on either side
of her making her slightly dizzy.

LIBBY:
(turning)
What's the matter -- afraid of heights?

ESTHER:
(recovering quickly)
No -- oh, no! ...

She almost sprints across the catwalk, and goes in the door on
the other end, after Libby.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
10/20/53
46B.

54-H. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE PROJECTION ROOMS

NEW SCENE
Libby comes in from the catwalk and strides along the corridor followed by Esther who has to hurry to keep up. The head of the publicity department opens a projection room door and enters.

54-I. INT. DARKENED PROJECTION ROOM

NEW SCENE
Esther half stumbles in after Libby, her eyes unaccustomed to the sudden change of light and her senses shocked by the yells and shouts coming from the screen.

Oliver Niles is running a Western. A cutter with a shaded light for note-making sits near him.

LIBBY:

(raising his voice)

Mr. Niles!

OLIVER:

(also shouting)

Libby?

(annoyed)

I'm running a picture.

LIBBY:

I thought you ought to meet this young lady -- she's just signed her contract.

(Oliver looks puzzled)

You know -- the one Mr. Maine arranged the test for. Remember?

OLIVER:

Oh, yes, yes. Of course. Glad to meet you, dear.

Esther feels her way toward Oliver, comes up against a seat, and stands directly in the path of light from the projection machine. The shooting on the screen breaks out afresh, almost obliterating her murmured, "How do you do, Mr. Niles," which she aims in the general direction from whence came Oliver's voice.

OLIVER:

(as Libby pulls Esther out of the picture beam)

Glad to have you with us.

(to Libby).

Show Miss - er -- how to get out of here.

(to Esther)

Good luck to you, dear, and take care of yourself.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
10/20/53
46C.

54-I (Cont.)

Libby already has Esther by the hand and is leading her back of the screen - on which the cowboys and Indians are whooping it up -- to an exit door. He opens it and the bright light of day strikes them both.

54-J. BALCONY OUTSIDE PROJECTION ROOM

Esther stands blinking in the sudden light, as Libby, letting the projection room door close behind them, starts down the iron steps to the ground.

ESTHER:

What do I do now, Mr. Libby?

Libby stops halfway down the steps and turns.

LIBBY:

What did you say your name was?

ESTHER:

Esther Blodgett.

LIBBY:

Uh-huh. We'll have to do something about that right away.

ESTHER:

(starting down steps)

Why, I ...

LIBBY:

(continuing down himself)

Don't worry about it. We'll have a name for you by the end of the week.

He reaches the ground and disappears around the corner of the building.

54-K. ANOTHER ANGLE

Confused and bewildered, Esther comes slowly down the steps. Near the bottom they join -- or almost join -- another set of steps leading up another side of the building. There is something familiar about them. Esther looks up, and there above her is the sign, "Publicity". She is back exactly where she started from a little while ago. She pulls herself together, and with a fine show of belonging to the place, walks boldly to the turnstile in the wire fence through which she came. But as she hits its arms she almost bounces back. It is a one-way mechanism. Esther looks around her helplessly. Then her sense of humor comes to the rescue and she shakes her head with a rueful little smile for her own discomfort.

DISSOLVE TO:

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
10/20/53
47.

55. EXT. TRAIN SHED

It has three long tracks, on two of which are six-car trains. Through the open doors of the shed a long, picturesque tenement street can be seen. Since the tenement street is not the set that is to be shot, there is the usual paraphernalia parked around -- portable dressing rooms, lights, etc.

It is a hot California day and the crew are in various states of undress, T-shirts, etc.

It is Esther's first day of work under her new contract, her first opportunity. Naturally she is very much on the qui vive. The assistant director takes her to the director. This action is far enough away so that we don't hear the instructions that the director is giving her, but he is pointing to the train coach. Esther drinks in his instructions and nods her head, all eagerness and tension. She gets into the "mock-up" railroad

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
10/9/53
47-A.

55 (Cont.)

coach. A wardrobe woman helps her into a large and very heavy fur coat, and she seats herself next to an open window.

We cut to the outside of the same coach where we see Esther, having taken her place at the window. Our camera is raking down the outside of the entire six cars, in the foreground of which is the prop camera, its crew, the director, etc. The train is about to take off because we see the passengers ready to entrain, the porters, etc. We also now see the reason for the fur coat. About a quarter of the outside of the railroad car in which Esther sits is all fixed up for a big snow scene. The glass is cloudy, the roof of the car is covered with snow, and there is snow on the ground as well. Icicles hang on the window. Just the section that the prop camera is supposed to be photographing is 'dressed' for the snow scene. The rest of the train is as is. The technicians are hard at work, the lights have been adjusted, and there is a sound effect that indicates that the train is about to start. We see the special effects man with a pipe, feeding the steam up into the scene as though it were coming from under the car. The director says "Camera!" Our camera now slowly trucks up past the prop camera, and we photograph the scene that the prop camera is presumably getting. Out of a beclouded, ice-frosted window of a snow-covered train, a fur-coated arm is thrust through the window. In its hand is a lace handkerchief which it begins to wave. The steam is coming up most convincingly....the sound effects of the train chugging away, etc..... Suddenly the director's voice yells "Cut!"

We cut to another shot where we see the director, who is obviously annoyed. "We saw her face!" (to Esther) "We saw your face! Keep back! Keep back!" Esther is very embarrassed. The director says, "Let's do it again. Now mind you, be careful - I don't want to see your face!"

The next scene is shot from the inside of the "mock-up" coach. The prop camera still remains on the outside, photographing the scene. We hear the director say, "All right -- camera!" This time Esther becomes a contortionist. She stretches her arm way out, does the waving business, but keeps her head and body safely averted.

DISSOLVE TO:

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
48.

56. THE CASHIER'S WINDOWS AT THE NILES STUDIO

There are several windows marked A B C D E F G, etc.

A long line of actors and other employees of the Niles Studio is lined up in front of the window -- Esther is about the third in line, under the window marked B.

ESTHER:
(as she reaches the window)
Esther Blodgett, please.

CASHIER:
(riffing through a card index)
Go to "L".

ESTHER:
(startled)
What?

CASHIER:
Go to "L". The window marked "L". You're listed under "L".

ESTHER:
(bewildered but uncomplaining)
Oh, thank you.

She moves away from the "B" window and takes her place in line at the "L" window.

ESTHER:
(as she reaches the window)
Esther Blodgett, please.

CASHIER:
New here?

ESTHER:
Yes.

CASHIER:
Just a moment.
(he riffles through a little card index at his side)
Okay. Your name is Vicki Lester.

ESTHER:
What?

CASHIER:
Your name is Vicki Lester.
(she stares at him surprised)
Vicki Lester. V-I-C-K-I L-E-S-T-E-R! Get it?
(he shoves the check toward her)
Move on, please.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/10/53
49-50.

56 (Cont.)

Esther moves away from the window, the check in her hands, looking down at it unbelievably. She decides to try out the sound of it herself.

ESTHER:

Vicki Lester!

(she shrugs - then tries another reading;
soft and coy)

Vicki Lester!

(she shakes her head; this time she makes it
majestic - a 'star' reading)

Vicki Lester!

(she laughs)

Could have been worse. Could have been Beverly
Wilshire!

DISSOLVE TO:

57. OMITTED (A SORDID TENEMENT STREET)

57A. OMITTED (ANGLE OVER VICKI'S BACK TOWARD PROP CAMERA)

57B. OMITTED (CLOSER ANGLE AT STAR'S DRESSING ROOM)

58. INT. MAINE'S DRESSING ROOM

Norman is reclining on a sofa thumbing through a magazine as
Oliver Niles comes in.

NORMAN:

Hi, Oliver.

OLIVER:

Why couldn't you come over to the office to see me,
Norman? What's so hush-hush you have to drag me down
here?

NORMAN:

Whenever I have a favor to ask, I like to do it on
my own home grounds.

OLIVER:

All right, I'm here. What do you want?

NORMAN:

Every time I lie down here, Oliver, I get stabbed in
the back. That's what I wanted to talk to you about.

(he gets up from sofa)

Do me a favor - just sit down here a minute --- isn't
that the most uncomfortable chair you ever sat in in
your life? ... This place gives me the creeps ...
I'll bet it hasn't been redecorated in centuries.
Don't you think I deserve a dressing room that's
modern, cheerful and safe?

OLIVER:

I don't believe it! Do you mean you actually got me
down here to talk about this?

NORMAN:

The thing is, Oliver, I'm ashamed to have an inter-
view in this room. Aren't you ashamed to have one
of your stars . . .

OLIVER:

(cutting in)

I've got a whole studio sitting on me right here
today --

(CONTINUED)

58 (Cont.)

OLIVER: (Cont.)

(he taps his chest)

- and you get me down here for this! Do you know I've got a picture shut down -- right in the middle of shooting -- that's what you took me away from -- I'm being stabbed by a singer in New York, not just a sofa!

NORMAN:

(all sympathy)

I know, Oliver -- I heard you had to stop shooting, because you couldn't get her out here. What are you doing to do?

OLIVER:

I don't know what I'm going to do. Except go crazy. That woman swore her contract was up with the show! Our lawyers are talking to New York this afternoon - (irritably)

Why are they playing that stuff so loud?

(he crosses to the window and slams it shut)

NORMAN:

Better leave it open, Oliver -- we'll suffocate in here.

He goes to the window and opens it again. During all of the foregoing, from the time that Norman raised the window shade, from the projection building across the way, has come the voice of Esther on a sound track singing the song she sang at the Downbeat Club.

OLIVER:

What is it, anyway? I can hardly hear myself think.

NORMAN:

Just somebody running off some tests. I suppose there's nobody around here, huh?

OLIVER:

What?

NORMAN:

I said, you'd think there'd be somebody around here you could take a chance on -- and not hold up a whole picture -- times being so tough as they are.

OLIVER:

Who, for instance. Name me someone.

NORMAN:

(all innocence)

I don't know, Oliver.

(CONTINUED)

58 (Cont.1)

OLIVER:

You actors think that all there is to running a studio is just pressing buttons. It's not that easy, believe me. If it was, why -- say, who is that singing anyway?

NORMAN:

Must be some contract girl. Not bad.

OLIVER:

No, not bad at all.

(he listens intently for a moment, Then:)

Oh. A light begins to break. Very dumb of me.

(he faces Maine, a rueful smile on his face)

I get it. Just a little late, that's all. Is she still around?

NORMAN:

Indeed, indeed!

(he goes to the door and calls out:)

Esther! Esther -- come on in!

DISSOLVE TO:

59. A SOUND STAGE NILES STUDIO

A big musical number is in the throes of coming to life.

The dancers, lavishly costumed, stand or lounge in groups against the glittering set.

Two people alone are not in costume. Esther and a young man, evidently her partner in the number. They weave back and forth across the set, humming to themselves, marking out the number as the Director watches.

As the CAMERA FOLLOWS them, their faces intent, it passes them and sweeps past and over the set to a dark corner of the huge sound stage. In the dimness, no one aware of his presence, stands Norman Maine, watching too.

DISSOLVE TO:

60. A CAR DRIVING ALONG THE ROAD

NIGHT

Norman is driving, Esther sits next to him. Norman's face has a tight, false gaiety -- he is making an obvious effort to be casual and carefree, and with very little success, for Esther, beside him, stares straight ahead through the windshield, quite as though she were being driven to the gallows.

NORMAN:

I've been through this a hundred times, Esther -- my own previews as well as other people's -- and the thing to remember about a preview, my girl, is first and foremost, pay absolutely no attention to the

(CONTINUED)

60 (Cont.)

NORMAN: (Cont.)
sights and sounds going on around you. If the picture before the preview is a stinker, your picture starts better - and anyway, they always go out for fresh popcorn so that the first few reels always sound like the Marines landing at Iwo Jima. Now, another thing -- don't be disturbed by people streaming up and down the aisles in the middle of the picture - doesn't mean they hate it - they're just going to the bathroom. Remember, they've usually sat through two pictures before. Then there's always a lot of teen-agers who don't even bother to look at the screen - don't let that bother you - that's just young love. And there's always a number of little kids with their mothers who start to yowl just as your big scene comes on. Pay no attention to that, either. The best thing to do is --

ESTHER:
(in a still small voice)
Norman -- would you stop the car, please!

NORMAN:
(understanding it at once)
Certainly.

Norman stops the car and Esther gets out into the darkness. Alone, he suddenly slumps back in his seat and takes out his handkerchief and wipes his face and even his hands. Then, as Esther opens the door of the car, he immediately puts on his carefree manner and face again.

All right? NORMAN: (CONT.)

ESTHER:
Fine. Just wish I was dead, though.

They drive on in silence for a few moments, and then as they approach the movie theatre, Norman's face breaks into a smile and he points ahead through the windshield.

61. THE MARQUEE OF A THEATRE
The electric lights spell out:

NORMAN MAINE

in

THE ENCHANTED HOUR

And directly underneath is a banner proclaiming:

MAJOR STUDIO PREVIEW TONIGHT

62. NORMAN ESTHER
in the car.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/7/53
54.

62 (Cont.)

As they drive toward the picture theatre, Norman sees that his picture is being played ahead of the preview.

NORMAN:

We're in luck, Esther, we're in luck!

ESTHER:

What happened? Theatre burn down?

NORMAN:

That picture of mine is so bad that anything they see after it is going to seem just great! Come on, out you get! You're starting lucky!

DISSOLVE TO:

63. INT. OF THE THEATRE THE BALCONY

Esther and Maine sit huddled together, staring straight ahead at the screen as though it were some horrendous monster. There is a burst of music from the screen.

NORMAN:

(as he quietly presses Esther's hand)
There she blows!

DISSOLVE TO:

64. THE SCREEN

The Big Number, glimpsed in its bare bones on the sound stage, is played out in full.

DISSOLVE TO:

65. THE LOBBY OF THE THEATRE

It is empty. Then there is a blare of music from within - the unmistakable sound of a picture finishing - and then the doors surge open and the crowd bursts into the lobby. Norman, Esther and Oliver are together for only a moment - then the fans overflow toward Esther, detaching Norman from her and Oliver. There is a good deal of "ohing" and "ahing" and "Gee, you were wonderful," etc., until Oliver and some other studio men manage to form a protecting circle around Esther, and the ushers show the crowd out of the lobby. Esther stands in the middle of the group, her head turning from face to face, her eyes large and bewildered.

A MAN:

Never heard such comments, Oliver -- it's like hearing money drop into the box-office.

OLIVER:

(soberly)

It's a shot in the arm that we needed, I don't mind telling you.

THE DIRECTOR:

They just sat there with their mouths hanging open, waiting for her to come back on the screen!

(CONTINUED)

65 (Cont.)

ANOTHER MAN:

Get her next picture lined up fast, Oliver - the exhibs are going to be screaming for it!

ANOTHER MAN:

What about Vicki for the Morgan script, Oliver? Switch Backer to something else! It's all ready to go -- she can be shooting by next week.

OLIVER:

(smiling)

Gently, gentlemen, gently. We haven't heard a word from you yet, Vicki.

ESTHER:

(she blinks and passes her hand across her forehead. She starts to speak, but stops, then:)

Where's Norman?

They all look around a little startled - leaning against the wall in a far corner of the lobby is the forgotten figure of Norman Maine.

OLIVER:

What are you doing over there, Norman?

NORMAN:

Just watching the wheels beginning to turn. I'm waiting to hear what Cinderella has to say, too.

Esther goes quickly to him and speaks softly, so that the others cannot hear.

ESTHER:

Thank you.

NORMAN:

(he smiles down at her for a moment, then:)

Nobody buying anybody a drink on the strength of all this success?

(he laughs)

I heard a couple of comments on my picture that makes me feel the need of one.

There is an embarrassed laugh from the others - but nobody says anything. They start moving out of the lobby.

DISSOLVE TO:

66. THE TERRACE OF A NIGHTCLUB IN HOLLYWOOD

The same group stand on the terrace, the city etched in Neon down below them. From the room behind them comes the STRAINS of a rhumba orchestra, and coming out of the doors toward them, waving aloft a sheaf of preview cards above his head, is Matt Libby, all smiles.

"A. STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
2/17/54
56-57

TO BE SHOT

66 (Cont.)

LIBBY:

Never saw preview cards like this before in all my life, gentlemen. I waited behind for the breakdown -- 97% say you've got a new star, Oliver! I'll need a lot of stuff on you right away, Vicki! Better be in my office tomorrow morning early! Read 'em, gentlemen, and enjoy yourselves!

(he passes packets of the cards around)

The following are excited ad libs from the men:

FIRST MAN:

Look at this one!
(referring to an especially good preview card)

SECOND MAN:

They can spot a star the minute they see one.

THIRD MAN:

How about Vicki for the script I've got lined up, Oliver?

FOURTH MAN:

They haven't said this about anyone in years.

This conversation swirls about Esther's head. Norman is standing on the outer fringe of the group. He taps Esther on the shoulder. She looks at him. He takes her hand and they exit to the terrace.

66a. TERRACE

as Esther and Norman enter. Norman points to the city glistening below.

NORMAN:

It's all yours now, Esther. Not just swimming pools and Cadillacs. It's all yours in more ways than one. I hope.....

(CONTINUED)

66A (Cont.)

ESTHER:

Yes? Say it, Norman.

NORMAN:

(he comes close to her and his hand gently caresses her hair)
You're going to be a great star, Esther.
Don't let it change you too much. Don't let it take over your life. -- You're very dear . . .

ESTHER:

(looking up at him)
You make it sound like the end of something, Norman -- instead of the beginning. You make it sound like -- goodbye.

NORMAN:

(as he moves away)
I've done all I can for you. You've come as far along the road with me as you should. Let's leave it that way.

ESTHER:

(she comes to him and slowly speaks)
Don't you know how I feel about you, Norman?

NORMAN:

(he looks at her a moment)
Yes, -- yes, I do . . .

ESTHER:

Don't you know that nothing about you matters to me but . . .

NORMAN:

(averting his head)
It's too late . . .

ESTHER:

It isn't, -- it isn't!

NORMAN:

(harshly)
It is, I tell you!

ESTHER:

There is nothing you can tell me about yourself I don't know, -- nothing that could make me stop loving you.

(CONTINUED)

66A (Cont.1)

NORMAN: (Cont.)

(he takes her violently by the
shoulders)

- Listen to me! I destroy everything I touch, --
I always have. Forget about me, do you hear?!
I'm a bad lot. You've come too late.

ESTHER:

I don't believe that. It's not too late.
Not for you - - -

(her arms go around him and her
head on his bosom)

- - - and not for me.

NORMAN:

(as his arms enclose her hungrily)
Don't say that, Esther -- I might begin to
believe it.

ESTHER:

Oh, believe it! Believe it!

His lips press down on hers.

DISSOLVE TO:

67. A RECORDING STAGE AT THE NILES STUDIO

Sixty musicians in shirt sleeves sit on camp chairs facing
the musical director. By the side of most of the chairs
stand half-empty coca cola bottles or cans of beer, making
it obvious that the recording session has been going on
for some time.

Facing the musicians is a large mixed chorus, the men in
sports shirts or sweat shirts, the girls mostly in
sweaters and slacks.

Y SHOT

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
59.

67 (Cont.)

In front of them stands Esther -- she, too, in a turtle neck sweater and slacks, a handkerchief tied around her forehead to keep the perspiration out of her eyes. She holds a sheet of manuscript music in her hand, and next to her, their heads bent over it together, stands Danny McGuire - she has evidently had her way about who was to make her vocal arrangements.

ESTHER:

Slow on the first eight -- is this right, Danny?

DANNY:

That's right. Pick it up for the middle and the release -- then tacit. The chorus takes the dance arrangement. Okay?

ESTHER:

I get it.

Danny moves to the side of the musical director and gives him the nod. He lifts his hand to the orchestra, and Esther begins the song. As she finishes the chorus, she moves away to one side, and the boys and girls pick it up under Danny's direction.

She moves directly over to Norman, who is slouching against the wall, and asks him something. He nods. They listen for a brief moment to the chorus singing, and then he asks Esther something, to which she smiles quietly and makes a reply. No word of what they are saying is audible, for the sound is focused entirely on the chorus, but at one moment the CAMERA SHIFTS from them to the boys in the control booth who listen goggle-eyed through the glass to what is evidently coming over an open mike and then burst into laughter.

As the boys and girls finish the chorus, Danny calls out -

DANNY:

Okay, fellows - let's have the playback.
Just the last eight on Miss Lester -- I
want the chorus arrangement.

The playback begins over the loudspeaker, filling the sound stage. With the voices of the chorus as a background, all that Norman and Esther have been saying to each other emerges loud and clear and unmistakable.

ESTHER'S VOICE:

How did I sound?

NORMAN'S VOICE:

Just adequate.

ESTHER'S VOICE:

(a little laugh)

Best friend and severest critic department, eh?
How about that arrangement Danny made for the
chorus? Great, isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN'S VOICE:

Wasn't listening. I was thinking about another kind of arrangement.

ESTHER'S VOICE:

Another kind?

NORMAN'S VOICE:

Uh-huh. Domestic. Will you marry me?

ESTHER'S VOICE:

(politely)

No, thank you.

She hums along with the chorus.

NORMAN'S VOICE:

Why not?

ESTHER'S VOICE:

Because you're irresponsible and...

She hums again.

NORMAN'S VOICE:

Go ahead -- stop that humming and go ahead. What else?

ESTHER'S VOICE:

You drink too much.

(she sings softly, along with the chorus)

"My heart insisted, I seek you out."

NORMAN'S VOICE:

Well, suppose I quit drinking?

ESTHER'S VOICE:

(again, softly with the chorus)

"That you existed, My heart had no doubt."

NORMAN'S VOICE:

And suppose I became absolutely dependable on all occasions --

ESTHER'S VOICE:

(a little laugh)

You wouldn't be Norman Maine. I'd be marrying the wrong man. Norman --

NORMAN'S VOICE:

Yes?

ESTHER'S VOICE:

Would you do all that if I said I'd marry you?

NORMAN'S VOICE:

No. Had a chance to think it over, with all that humming and singing -- and it's too much to ask.

The playback finishes. The musicians and chorus are roaring with laughter.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
61.

68. ESTHER AND NORMAN

ESTHER:

Well, you're hooked now, my boy!
It's too public a proposal for me to
say 'no' to. I accept!

DISSOLVE TO:

69. NILES' OFFICE

Esther and Norman are standing before Niles' desk, Libby sits
slumped in a chair to one side.

NORMAN:

(to Esther)

I guess I didn't read that line right. I'll
try again.

(to Niles)

We're going to get married.

ESTHER:

(smiling)

Both of us.

NORMAN:

To each other. What do you think of that?

ESTHER:

(seeing Niles' curious expression)

What's the matter?

NORMAN:

He's trying to decide whether it's good for
the studio.

ESTHER:

(quietly - to Niles)

Is it?

OLIVER:

(recovering himself)

It is.

(warmly)

My blessings.

NORMAN:

A little unsteady -- but thank you. How long a
honeymoon are you going to give us, Oliver?

OLIVER:

(looking at his desk calendar)

I'll want you back by the tenth -- no, better
make it the ninth.

NORMAN:

Hey, don't let your heart run away with your
head!

OLIVER:

(he laughs)

I'll call production and read them.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
62.

69 (Cont.)

NORMAN:

(drily - as he leads Esther toward the door)
While you're settling the details of our honeymoon,
is it all right if I go out and buy the lady a ring?

OLIVER:

(smiling)

Sure, we want everything legal.

Oliver Niles stares after them for a long moment after they have
gone...then:

LIBBY:

(from the depths of the chair)

That was quite a decision you made then, Oliver.

OLIVER:

Decision?

LIBBY:

Letting that girl walk straight into a booby trap.

OLIVER:

(shortly)

Vicki's business is her own.

LIBBY:

Is it? She's the hottest piece of property the
studio has right now.

Niles is silent. He looks thoughtfully out of the window before
he turns back to Libby.

OLIVER:

(slowly)

This might make the difference to Norman -- this
might be it.

LIBBY:

Any bets?

Niles does not reply. They just look levelly at each other.

LIBBY:

Well, I'd better start the wheels grinding.

(he picks up the telephone)

A big front page splash on the wedding will certainly
help his slipping box-office.

(into the telephone)

Matt Libby. Get my office. Markhem? Lester and
Maine are getting married. Yeah. I want all stops
pulled out. Full coverage all departments. Wedding
to end all weddings, get it? See if you can get the
Mayor to close the schools for the afternoon -- I'll
give you the date -- and get started on newsreels and
television, coverage right away. Get traffic routed
out of Beverly Hills for two miles each side of the
church - yeah -- the big one -- tell the Life, Time,
A.P. and U.P. boys I'll set up restricted coverage
with each of them personally. Yeah. Bleachers, --
everything. The full treatment.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
63.

70. INT. JAIL CORRIDOR

In the foreground are a couple of cells. The first cell is empty, but in the second one are two mangy looking vagrants standing up to the bars and watching the doorway with great interest. OVER this scene, we HEAR:

JUSTICE OF PEACE'S VOICE:

And now, if any man can show just cause why these two may not be lawfully joined together, let him now speak or else hereafter forever hold his peace.

During this speech the CAMERA has been SLOWLY PULLING BACK into the Justice of Peace's chambers until it now HOLDS on CLOSE SHOT of Esther and Maine standing before the elderly J.P. McGuire is acting as best man.

JUSTICE OF PEACE:

(after a pause)

Do you, Ernest Sidney Gubbins take this woman as your wedded wife? Will you love, comfort, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health, as long as you both shall live?

NORMAN:

(seriously)

I will.

JUSTICE OF PEACE:

(to Esther)

Do you, Esther Blodgett, take this man as your wedded husband? Will you obey, serve, love, honor, and keep him, in sickness and in health, as long as you both shall live?

ESTHER:

(her voice breaks; there are tears in her eyes)

I -- I will.

JUSTICE OF PEACE:

(to Norman)

Place the ring on her finger.

With nervous fingers, Maine slips the wedding ring on Esther's finger.

JUSTICE OF PEACE:

Now, by virtue of the powers vested in me, as Justice of Peace of San Verdo Township, County of Los Angeles, I pronounce you man and wife.

71. ESTHER AND NORMAN

As they look at each other speechlessly.

2. TWO BUMS IN CELL

Applauding madly!

73. JUSTICE OF PEACE'S CHAMBERS

JUSTICE OF PEACE:

(smiling)

I must exercise my prerogative of office.

(he bends forward, kisses
her on the cheek)

I hope you will be very happy, Mrs. Gubbins.

ESTHER:

Thank you.

(looking around, smiling)

Where's the best man?

Danny comes up, too moved to speak. Esther hugs him. The Justice of Peace watches.

JUSTICE OF PEACE:

(to McGuire)

If you'll just sign the license --

(to Esther)

You know, I could swear I'd seen you some place
before, Mrs. Gubbins.

ESTHER:

(nervously)

Oh - oh, really? I think this is the first time
I've ever been in San Verdo.

JUSTICE OF PEACE:

(to Maine)

Your face seems familiar, too, Mr. Gubbins.

I wonder --

(he breaks off as Maine hands
him a bill; the size of it makes
him gasp)

Thank you, sir!

But immediately he looks at them more suspiciously than ever. McGuire, who has been signing the license, hands it to Maine.

DANNY:

Here's your receipt.

Maine stows it away in his pocket. As the Justice continues to stare at them fixedly, Norman and Esther, anxious to escape, move hurriedly toward the door.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
65.

73 (Cont.)

Goodbye. NORMAN:

Goodbye. ESTHER:

Maine, Esther and Danny go hurriedly out a door in the rear of the room leading to the second-floor hallway. The J.P. watches them go. Then he shakes his head, unable to arrive at any decision as to where he has seen them before, and exits through the doorway into the courtroom.

Esther, Maine and Danny hurry down the hallway toward the stairs in the background.

DANNY:
(jubilantly)
I think you got by with it.

NORMAN:
It was close. That J.P. was just beginning to remember where he'd seen us.

ESTHER:
(with a little laugh)
Anyway - we got away from Libby.

NORMAN:
(confidently)
Libby doesn't even know we left town.

74. THE GROUP

come down the stairs TOWARD CAMERA. Suddenly they all stop, transfixed by something they see at the foot of the stairs.

75. EXT. AT DOOR LIBBY

who stands looking up at them.

LIBBY:
(bitterly - as they come toward him)
If you will be kind enough to glance between my shoulder blades, Mr. and Mrs. Gubbins, you will find there a knife -- buried to the hilt. On the handle are your initials.

ESTHER:
Please don't be angry with us.

NORMAN:
(hurrying Esther on)
Lovely to have seen you, Libby. Goodbye.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
66.

76. COURTHOUSE

Maine's roadster is parked by the curb. Esther and he leap into it.

LIBBY:
(frantically)

Wait!

NORMAN:
Hold him, Danny!

Danny blocks the frantic Libby as Maine's car goes racing down the quiet, tree-lined little street.

LIBBY:
(furiously)
Well, I wish 'em joy! Wait till they see the press they get; it won't be so funny!

DANNY:
They've got a right to get married quietly if they want to.

LIBBY:
(savagely)
No they haven't. He knows better than that. And Mr. Public Nuisance could stand some decent publicity for a change, believe me! I've spent ten years covering up for him -- killing bad stories -- sucking up to the columnists to smooth away his insults -- who do you think they're going to blame for not letting them cover this? Him? No! Me -- I just look like a fool -- double-crossed by a cruddy actor. He needed this, too. More than I did, believe me.

(he laughs bitterly)
Okay. Just wait your turn, I always say. What do you always say, McGuire?

He turns and walks away.

DISSOLVE TO:

77. A MOTEL

Norman and Esther are removing their bags from the car and carrying them into one of the regulation little bungalows, set one beside the other.

As they get inside the room, Norman sets the bags down. He stands for a moment, a slow smile spreading over his face -- then he opens his arms and Esther comes into them. They stand locked in an embrace for a moment, and then Norman gently tilts her face up to his.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/9/53
67.

77 (Cont.)

NORMAN:

I think the first thing to do is to go and wash your face. It's quite dirty.

ESTHER:

I know it's dirty. You didn't want anybody to recognize us, did you?

NORMAN:

That's right. But you can unmask now, darling. I paid the two dollars - I'd like to see what I got.

SHE laughs and goes into the bathroom with her bag. He starts to unpack his bag in the room, turns on the radio. The disc jockey on the radio begins to speak.

DISC JOCKEY:

And now, folks, Vicki Lester singing the title song from her new picture, "It's A New World". This is the number one tune of the Hit Parade and the number one favourite on the juke boxes all over the country. Vicki Lester, "It's A New World".

The song comes over the radio. Esther re-enters from the bathroom in a housecoat.

NORMAN:

There it is, Esther -- you've got it like you dreamed it.

ESTHER:

(runs into his arms)

No -- I've got more! So much more!

He holds her tight in his arms for a moment, then reaches one arm behind him and snaps off the radio, cutting off the song. She lifts her head and looks up at him questioningly.

NORMAN:

That's for ordinary folks who have to turn on a radio or put a nickel in a juke box. I've got a private copyright all my own -- including the Scandinavian. I've got the built-in original right in the house any time I want to hear it. And I want it now. To kind of celebrate.

He sits abruptly down in a chair and looks up at her. Without a word, she sinks down beside him, and her head resting on his arm, she sings, "It's A New World" just for the two of them.

When she finishes there is silence between them. His hand strokes her hair, but they do not speak. They seem, both of them, to be treasuring this moment.

DISSOLVE TO:

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/7/53
69.

78 (Cont.)

ESTHER:

Sounds? You can't tell now, silly --
wait till the walls get in!

NORMAN:

Go ahead. For luck. I'm superstitious.
You know the old saying, "A song to begin,
brings good luck in."

ESTHER:

(laughs)

Never heard it before in my life.

But she sings the first phrase of "It's a New World".

ESTHER:

Wherever did you pick that one up, Norman?
"A song to begin, brings good luck in."

NORMAN:

I didn't pick it up -- I just made it up.
How do you think superstitions begin, anyway?
Somebody says, "A stitch in time saves nine"
and people go on saving stitches for the rest
of their lives! Ever try keeping a stiff upper
lip and see how funny your face looks after a
while?

ESTHER:

And I'm fool enough to believe him!

She swings her bag at him but misses, and trips over a
rock.

NORMAN:

Watch it! Look before you swing! Remember
that one?

DISSOLVE TO:

79.

STUDIO STREET

A car comes speeding from the b.g., and when it gets closer
we recognize Oliver Niles at the wheel. He pulls up at the
end of the street, f.g., and gets out. CAMERA PANS him
across to the Asst. Director who comes forward to meet him.
Behind the crew and actors are lounging around waiting. There
is an air of trouble about things.

79 (Cont.)

ASST. DIRECTOR:

Mr. McBride is right over there by the tank, sir.
(calls off as Oliver nods and goes in
that direction)

Mr. McBride!

79A. CLOSE ANGLE CHINESE JUNK

Apparently resting at anchor in a harbor, the docks and squalid oriental streets stretching away in the b.g. against a sky of brilliant blue. The Asst. Director's VOICE, at some distance now, repeats the call, "Mr. McBride!" Suddenly, the figure of a giant rises up from behind the junk, towering over it.

GIANT:

(answering call)

Here!

Now the ANGLE WIDENS and we see that the junk is a miniature, erected in the f.g. of a tank set, against a painted backing of city and sky - and that the giant is BOB McBRIDE, the Director. He has been stooped behind the miniature, examining it with a technician. The mock camera is set up on a section of full-sized junk, moored near a piece of dock...McBride sees Oliver approaching and comes around from behind the miniature to meet him. Oliver is all business.

OLIVER:

Where is he?

McBRIDE:

(indicating off)

In his dressing room...

(as Oliver turns to go in that direction,
McBride stops him)

Look, Oliver... you better get yourself another director. I like Maine -- and I'm willing to put up with a certain amount of shenanigans -- but when he starts on the first day of shooting! We got nothing this morning -- and he's been in there for over an hour now. I don't have to take that from anybody. I've got my own --

OLIVER:

(cutting in)

Okay...Okay, Bob. Take it easy...

He pats his shoulder and walks off in the direction indicated by McBride earlier.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
10/23/53
70.

79B. NEW YORK STREET

Oliver enters this directly from the last set, and we realize the two are contiguous. He strides up to an imposing hotel or bank entrance, and, without pausing, enters the building. The CAMERA TRUCKS parallel with him, passing across the end of the building wall, and picking up Oliver as he comes out the back of what is revealed to be a set. Amid the myriad of bracings and struts is a portable dressing room. Oliver walks directly to it.

79C. CLOSER ANGLE AT PORTABLE DRESSING ROOM

as Oliver stops in front of it.

OLIVER:

(calling)

Norman!

After two beats of silence the door is thrown open from the inside, and Norman appears, glass in hand. Behind him on the dressing table is an almost empty bottle of scotch. He looks like the devil -- his hair is unkempt, his dressing gown hangs loosely, and, although he is not really drunk, there is an over-brightness about him that bodes ill.

NORMAN:

Hi, Oliver. How nice of you to come down and offer your benediction on the first day. Join me in a little toast?

Oliver shakes his head and just stares at him.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
10/23/53
70-A.

79-C (Cont.)

NORMAN:

I like this script, Oliver. Good part, too. I think we've got a real one this time. Since you won't join me in a little toast to success?

OLIVER:

(sharply)

What's the matter with you? Is it always going to be the same? Is it never going to be any different?

Norman stops the glass in mid-air and looks at him.

OLIVER:

(continuing)

What's the excuse this time? What is it you want? What is it you need? Or is it me that's the fool? I thought you loved Esther -- I know she loves you. Doesn't that make any difference? Doesn't it? Why do you do this? Why?

NORMAN:

(a slow smile spreading
across his face)

For all the wrong reasons, Oliver. Because I'm happy, because it was the first day of shooting and I was nervous -- because I'm me, I suppose -- and I guess that just doesn't make sense to a non-drinking man like yourself, does it?

OLIVER:

(violently)

No sense at all!

NORMAN:

Why, Oliver -- you're really angry with me!
(reaches in dressing room
and sets his glass down
without taking drink)

Can't have that! Come along to the set and watch me play a scene that will knock your eye out!

(shouts off)

What are we waiting for -- what's the delay around here? Let's go!

(he has thrown off his dressing
gown and is reaching for part
of a costume on a chair)

Smile, Oliver! You look like a crooked bond salesman when you're mad!

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
10/23/53
70-B.

79-D. THE TANK SET

The Asst. Director comes running from the New York Street.

ASST. DIRECTOR:

Get ready to shoot! Places everybody!
Hit your lights, Jerry!

NEW
SCENE

The whole set comes to life, whistles blow, booster lights go on, actors take their places on the dock and junk, and finally Bob McBride drifts into the scene, looking off toward the New York street as if he half doubted the whole thing.

79-E. NEW YORK STREET

Norman comes briskly out of the imposing building, his arm linked through Oliver's. His hair is now in place and he is dressed for the scene, but far beyond this, Norman's whole being seems to have been transformed. Gone are the saggy cheeks, the loose mouth, the belligerent manner. Friendly goodfellowship shines from his eyes, and like the proverbial old fire horse when the bell rings, he fairly bristles with eagerness and a desire to get going.

NEW
SCENE

NORMAN:

(calling)

Roll 'em, boys -- let's make pictures!

79-F. CLOSEUP BOB McBRIDE

His eyebrows go up in surprise.

NEW
SCENE

79-G. THE TANK SET

Norman, letting go of Oliver's arm, strides onto the set as the Asst. Director echos his "Roll 'em!" The cameras turn, Norman grasps a rope hanging from a derrick and backs up with it.

NEW
SCENE

CAMERAMAN:

Speed!

McBRIDE:

Action!

Taking a couple of quick steps forward, Norman swings out on his rope.

79-H. LONG ANGLE

Norman swings across the intervening space between the dock and Chinese junk, on which are two evil-looking PIRATES.

79-I. CLOSE ANGLE DECK OF JUNK

Norman sails onto the deck, and before letting go of the rope, disposes of one of the pirates with his feet by kicking him down an open hatch. Then he drops to the deck just in time to catch the arm of the other pirate who tries to slash him with a kriss. In almost the same motion, Norman lets the fellow have a neat right that sends him, too, toppling down the hatch. Norman stands there, breathing easily, ready for anything that may come.

McBRIDE:

Cut! Very good, Norman -- excellent!

And he's right. The whole thing has been a harmony of surprising skill and professional know how...Norman relaxes, points to the hatch, and turns to Oliver, smiling.

NORMAN:

The story of my life, Oliver -- down the merry old hatch!

79-J. CLOSEUP OLIVER

His little returning smile of appreciation is overshadowed by the deep fondness that shows in his eyes, for this fine artist that is destroying himself...

DISSOLVE TO:

80. THE LIVING ROOM OF THE BEACH HOUSE

Norman and Esther have evidently been living in the completed house now for some time. A butler moves about among the tables, emptying ash trays and Esther and a group of ladies are just coming down the stairs as Norman and some men, Oliver Niles among them, emerge from the library, cigars and brandy glasses in hand.

ESTHER:

(moving toward a sofa in
the back of the room)

I'll work the sound tonight, Norman. He turns it up so loud you can hear it in Pasadena.

NORMAN:

Yes, dear. The only two words necessary for a happy marriage, folks. "Yes, dear."

ESTHER:

Shut up and sit down, Norman -- we want to see the picture -- you're standing in front of the screen.

She flicks a switch on a little stand next to the sofa and the lamps in the living room dim. She touches another switch and the drapes across the large picture windows overlooking the ocean begin to close, and a screen comes up out of the floor in front of the fireplace at the other end of the room. A newsreel flashes on the screen as she fusses with some dials to get the sound to her liking.

The guests settle back comfortably in the easy chairs, lighting cigarettes or sipping at their drinks. In the darkness, after a moment, Oliver Niles slips out of his seat and slides quietly toward the library.

Norman turns as he sees him go -- waits a moment for his return, and then when he does not reappear, slips quietly out of his own seat and moves toward the library.

DISSOLVE TO:

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
72.

81. THE LIBRARY

Oliver is leaning over a television set, turning in various stations.

NORMAN:
(from the doorway - watching him)
Traitor!

OLIVER:
(turning)
There's a fight on I wanted to catch a bit of.
I've seen the picture, anyway.

NORMAN:
Why didn't you say something, Oliver? We could
have run something else.

OLIVER:
Doesn't matter. It's a good picture. You'll all
enjoy it. Go on back, Norman. I think the news-
reel's over.

NORMAN:
(looking at him)
You feeling all right, Oliver? You haven't said a
word all evening.

OLIVER:
I'm all right. Just one of my silent evenings. Go
ahead, Norman -- you'll miss the beginning.

NORMAN:
It's all right -- The credits will run for ten
minutes. I thought you were the one who never took
the studio home with you?

OLIVER:
(he laughs shortly)
This is different. I'm not at home.

NORMAN:
(he looks at him sharply for a moment)
This got anything to do with me? What you're
worrying about?

Oliver is silent. He swishes the ice around in his glass.

NORMAN:
Has it, Oliver?

OLIVER:
I'll tell you about it at the studio Monday. Will
you lunch with me?

NORMAN:
How about telling me now?

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
73.

81 (Cont.)

OLIVER:

This isn't the time or the place, Norman --
you've got guests inside and --

NORMAN:

(quietly)

Go ahead, Oliver. We've been friends too long for
us to play games with each other now. What's
sticking in your throat that you can't tell me?

A pause. Then:

OLIVER:

The New York boys have been out here for the past
week.

NORMAN:

They want me to take a salary cut?

OLIVER:

No, Norman.

(he sighs)

I guess the only way to say it is to say it.
They've instructed me to buy up the rest of your
contract -- to pay you off.

NORMAN:

Pay me off? But why? My last two or three pictures
haven't grossed as big as they used to, but neither
has anybody else's.

OLIVER:

They know that.

NORMAN:

Then what is it?

OLIVER:

(he looks squarely at him)

Can you take it?

NORMAN:

Go ahead.

OLIVER:

They can't afford you any more, Norman. You're too
big a risk. Those big, fat, lush days when a star
could get drunk and disappear and hold up production
for two weeks are over. Even if you hadn't --

(he hesitates)

-- slipped a little -- they still wouldn't take the
chance. Your record's too bad. No one can afford
it any more. Things are too tough. I tried, Norman
-- I tried very hard.

NORMAN:

(quietly)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
74.

81 (Cont.1)

NORMAN: (Cont.)

(he smiles and throws an arm across
Niles' shoulder)

Don't look so miserable, Oliver. There are other studios, you know. Only bad thing about it is, I won't be making pictures for you. Well, we've had a long roll of the dice, haven't we, Oliver -- mustn't complain now. By the way -- can you keep this under wraps for a while? I'd like to tell Esther about it in my own way.

Oliver nods.

NORMAN:

(he looks slowly around the room
and suddenly laughs)

I sure picked the right time to build a big new house, didn't I? You know, Oliver, I sometimes think I was born with a genius -- an absolute genius -- for doing the wrong thing.

DISSOLVE TO:

82. THE TOP OF A DESK

On the desk is a copy of a Trade Magazine "Exhibitors Guide". A man's hand is turning the pages and stops at the third page at a little box inset.

LIBBY'S VOICE:

(reading aloud)

"Exhibitors will be interested to learn that three scheduled Norman Maine Productions have been cancelled, as the Oliver Niles Studio has wisely and finally decided to buy out this star's contract."

The CAMERA COMES UP from the desk to REVEAL that the hand turning the pages is Matt Libby's. He smiles at a secretary sitting in a chair beside the desk, her pencil poised over a steno notebook.

LIBBY:

The wheel goes round and round -- and if you just wait long enough -- it's finally your turn.

(he notices she is writing)

Don't put that down, Miss Wheeler -- I was just talking to myself!

SECRETARY:

Oh, excuse me.

LIBBY:

That's all right, Miss Wheeler --

He looks out of the window where some men are pasting over a billboard of one of Maine's pictures with a large poster of Vicki Lester.

(CONTINUED)

82 (Cont.)

LIBBY:

(continuing)

I'm in the kind of mood today where you can make more than your usual quota of mistakes.

DISSOLVE TO:

83. PAIR OF SLIPPERS

The CAMERA PULLS BACK TO DISCLOSE the living room of the beach house, early evening. Norman, in tweed jacket, is practicing golf shots on the living room floor.

The telephone rings. He walks over, slumps down in a chair, and picks it up.

NOTE: In the following scene it is suggested that the split-screen method again be used, so that both men are seen talking on the telephone at the same time.

NORMAN:

Hello. Yes, this is Malibu 2-9010 -- No, she isn't. No, this isn't the butler.

84. THE MAN AT THE OTHER END

THE MAN:

Oh, is that you, Norman? This is Artie Carver. How are you? Say, as long as I've got you on the phone -- anything new with you? Made a deal at any other studio yet?

NORMAN:

No.

(patiently)

Nothing new with me at all, Artie.

CARVER:

Say, is it true you're trying to get Vicki to leave the studio because you're sore at Niles for settling your contract?

NORMAN:

(hotly)

No, it's not true. And don't start that rumor going, either!

CARVER:

Okay, Norman -- don't get sore. Just trying to help -- just trying to get your name in the papers, that's all. Well, anyway, what I called you for was I've been trying to get an interview with Vicki for two weeks but she's always busy. How about you giving an old pal a break and speaking to her for me.

NORMAN:

(dully)

Sure, I'll ask her.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/7/53
76.

84 (Cont.)

CARVER:

Fine. I'll put a squib in the column saying you're cooking up an independent deal some place. Won't fool anybody, but let 'em know you're alive, anyway. 'Bye now.

Norman hangs up, looks at the phone somberly for a moment, then lights a cigarette. There is the SOUND of a car coming. He straightens up hopefully. The car goes on. He slumps back again, pulls a card table up, shuffles a deck, and lays out a solitaire hand. The telephone rings again. He picks it up.

NORMAN:

Hello? No, Miss Lester isn't home yet.
(slowly)

Oh, yes -- Academy Award Reservations. Well, I don't know how many will be in my wife's party, I'll have to ask her. Yes, certainly. I'll let you know, goodbye.

He hangs up, stares grimly off, there is the SOUND of a car coming up the driveway. He leaps to his feet, his face lighting up, and opens the door. Esther enters and he takes her hungrily in his arms.

ESTHER:

I didn't mean to be so late, darling. But Casey wanted --

NORMAN:

It's all right. You're here now.

He hugs her again, and they start to walk in. Esther's eyes taking in the putting game and the cards spread out on the table. For an instant her face falls, but she forces a smile.

ESTHER:

Didn't you go fishing with Captain Black?

NORMAN:

No, I -- I haven't been out of the house.

ESTHER:

(quickly)

Let's go somewhere tonight.

NORMAN:

No, you're tired. We'll stay in.

ESTHER:

I'm not tired...really.

(CONTINUED)

DIALOGUE
CHANGE

NEW BUSINESS
AND
NEW DIALOGUE
FROM HERE
ON

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/7/53
77.

84 (Cont.1)

NORMAN:

You must be. Anyway, I see so little of you, that I'd rather have you to myself.

ESTHER:

(suddenly remembering)

But it's the servants' night out, Norman. We haven't --

NORMAN:

Yes, we have. I fixed a little snack with my own lily white hands.

(grins and kisses her
on the neck)

I'm learning to cook in my spare time.

ESTHER:

(smiles)

Then I think I'll marry you.

NORMAN:

(moving toward kitchen)

I get it. You want to make an honest cook of me.

Esther laughs, but as soon as Norman disappears into the pantry, her true feelings show. Slipping out of her coat, she glances again at the putting game and playing cards. But she disassembles quickly as Norman reappears from the pantry pushing a tea table ahead of him. It is laden with sandwiches, a salad, milk, olives, anchovies, etc.

NORMAN:

How's it look?

ESTHER:

Wonderful!

NORMAN:

That's what I thought.

(as Esther hesitates
over the table)

Don't be formal. Just pitch in.

The sandwiches are a man's sandwiches - huge slices of meat, great, unevenly cut slices of rye bread. Esther picks up one, but has difficulty getting her mouth around it.

ESTHER:

(apologetically)

I guess my mouth isn't quite big enough.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/7/53
78.

84 (Cont.2)

NORMAN:

I'll measure it and make the sandwiches to size next time.

(suddenly moves over to her)

I'll take the measurements now.

(he kisses her on the mouth
lingeringly; huskily)

That's what I wait for -- all day.

ESTHER:

And that's why I rush home without even changing my costume.

Esther feels his arms about her relax. His eyes flick over her briefly. Her innocent remark is a pricking reminder that she is a worker and that he is not. She watches him turn back to the tea table in an effort to regain his light mood.

NORMAN:

Here, we're forgetting we're hungry.

(he picks up a glass of milk)

Cheers! What went on at the studio today?

The old Alma Mater!

There is a slight smile on his lips, but Esther's heart bleeds for the withdrawn, hurt look in his eyes, though she can say nothing. Instead she forces a bright laugh and brings a gay smile to her face.

ESTHER:

We started shooting the big production number -- and it's the production number to end all big production numbers! It's an American in Paris, Brazil, the Alps and the Burma Road! It's got sex, schmaltz, patriotism, and more things coming up through the floor and down from the sky than you ever saw in your life!

She launches into the production number, taking all the parts herself - the ballet, the chorus boys, the show girls, the director, the leading man, a burlesque of herself, singing the main song, using anything she can lay her hands on in the room for props. She leaps on and off sofas, turns over chairs -- it is a tour de force designed solely to make him forget himself and laugh. And finally he does - wholeheartedly. She falls into his arms, exhausted. Her own laughter joining happily in his.

ESTHER:

(as his arms go around her)

Oh, my darling - it's so good to hear you laugh again! It's been so long!

NORMAN:

(holding her tightly)

I know, I know!

The doorbell sounds. They pay no attention. It continues, insistently. They awake, parting, having a little trouble coming back to reality.

NORMAN:

That's the doorbell.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/7/53
78-A.

34 (Cont.3)

ESTHER:
Maybe they'll go away.

NORMAN:
No, they never do at a time like this.

ESTHER:
Don't answer it.

NORMAN:
I'd better. Might be a cable. I sent one to Alex Korda about a picture in England. I've been expecting an answer. Maybe things are looking up.

Norman goes across the room to the entrance vestibule.

4-A. VESTIBULE

Norman comes to the door and opens it. A railway express man stands in the doorway with a package.

MAN:
Does Vicki Lester live here? I got a package for her.

NORMAN:
Can I sign for it?

MAN:
Who're you?

NORMAN:
I'm her husband.

MAN:
(extending book)
Sure.
(indicates line with pencil)
Sign right there, Mr. Lester.

Norman stares at him for an instant. Then he signs the book and hands it back. The express man gives him the package and a puzzled look, and goes. Norman stares after him a moment, then turns back into the living room.

-B. LIVING ROOM

as Norman comes in. Esther, who has taken one of the sandwiches apart and is nibbling at it, looks up with a smile, but her face falls when she sees his expression. All the light has gone out of him.

NORMAN:
(dully)
Package for you.
(he drops it in a chair; Esther doesn't even look at it)
By the way, I forgot to tell you - they want you for the Motion Picture Relief Fund Benefit at the Shrine Auditorium. It's in April sometime. I told them I'd ask. And --

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/7/53
79.

84-B (Cont.)

ESTHER:

Darling, I don't want to hear about them now!

NORMAN:

Better let me finish before I forget. The Academy secretary called. She wants to know how many there'll be at your table. Oh, yes -- Art Carver called and asked me if I'd use my influence with you to get him an interview. I told him I'd try...Ah -- that's all.

ESTHER:

(a shade too brightly)

Well! Now that the supper show is over -- how about supper?

NORMAN:

(his eyes not meeting hers)

I think I'll mix myself a drink... I'm not very hungry.

He starts for the den.

ESTHER:

(making an involuntary gesture
which she represses)

Norman --

He doesn't turn. She says no more.

DISSOLVE TO:

85. THE COCONUT GROVE FULL SHOT TOWARD STAGE

NE This is the Academy Award dinner. Men in dinner coats and women in elaborate evening dress crowd the tables to the farthest corners of the room. A large television screen is in evidence on which is being duplicated the same action as is taking place on the little stage.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/7/53
80.

85 (Cont.)

At the moment, the entire room is applauding and a band is playing as RAYMOND WALLACE, a youngish man but not a youth, mounts the stage from the audience to be greeted by SUSAN EDINGTON, last year's Oscar winner, who shakes hands with him and presents him, this year's male star winner, with the Award statuette. Wallace addresses the audience.

WALLACE:

My young son asked me if these Oscars were made of real gold. I had to be truthful and tell him, no, they weren't. He was disappointed...I wish I could have explained to him, and made him understand, that many of us feel that to win one of them - is ample reward for an entire career. I know I do. Thank you ...

86. CLOSE ANGLE ESTHER'S TABLE

On one side of her is Oliver, and on the other a vacant place - Norman's. Danny sits across from her and there is another couple at the table, rather elderly, and obviously friends of Oliver's. They are all listening to Wallace's speech, but both Oliver and Danny notice that Esther is upset by Norman's absence. She glances at the vacant place, then prayerfully off toward the entrance to the Grove. Oliver lays a reassuring hand on hers.

ESTHER:

Do you suppose something's happened to him?

OLIVER:

You know what the traffic's like - he's just been held up, that's all.

87. THE STAGE

Wallace leaves the stage to applause and music. The MASTER OF CEREMONIES takes his place at the mike. Behind him at the little table on which are the Oscars, stands the Price-Waterhouse man.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES:

To present the award for this year's Best Actress -- last year's Academy Award winner! Mr. Nigel Peters!

Applause. A distinguished looking actor enters from the wings and takes the M.C.'s place at the mike.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/7/53
81.

87 (Cont.)

NIGEL PETERS:

Those nominated for the Best Performance by
an Actress are:

(reads from a slip of paper)

Jane Branden..."Those Who Seek"...

88. ESTHER'S TABLE

There is an air of tension at the table as Peters reads the list of nominees. But Esther's tenseness is different from the others. Where is Norman? She hardly hears her name when it is read. Danny leans across the table to her.

DANNY:

Stop worrying and think how nice that
statuette's going to look on your mantelpiece.

NIGEL PETERS' VOICE:

(continuing without a break)

Katherine Hawley..."Stark Terror"...

Vicki Lester..."A World For Two"...

Alice Tenny..."The Great Chance"...

Shirley Vander..."Don't Cry My Love"...

89. THE STAGE

The Price-Waterhouse man hands Peters an envelope containing the name of the winner. Peters opens it.

90. ESTHER'S TABLE

Even she has succumbed to the suspense of the moment. A breathless hush has fallen over the entire room.

90-A. THE STAGE

With great deliberation Peters removes the slip from the envelope and reads it to himself first. Then:

NIGEL PETERS:

The winner is -- Miss Vicki Lester!

An ovation! With music!

90-B. ESTHER'S TABLE

Now that it has happened she can't quite believe it. She looks around, almost frightened for a moment, and then turns appealingly to Oliver who is applauding along with the rest.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/7/53
81-A.

90-B (Cont.)

OLIVER:
Go on. Get up there.

ESTHER:
(nervously)
I -- I wish Norman were here.

Suddenly she pulls herself together, rises, and walks toward the stage.

90-C. MED. ANGLE TOWARD STAGE

Esther threads her way through the applauding diners, many of whom have risen, to the stage.

90D. CLOSE ANGLE AT MICROPHONE

Esther receives the Oscar from Peters who kisses her hand and leaves. She faces the audience, and when the applause has subsided sufficiently, speaks.

ESTHER:
When something like this happens to you -
and I can't lie and say I didn't keep hoping
it would happen - all the speeches you
made up in your bedroom or in the bathtub
go right out of your head and you find that
out of all the words in the world, only
two stick in your mind.
(a pause)
Thank you. So all I can do is say them to
you from my heart and ...

She breaks off at the sound of solitary applause coming from the floor. She looks toward the entrance and stands frozen.

90-E. ANGLE TOWARD ENTRANCE TO ROOM

Norman comes from the entrance toward the stage, applauding as he walks. His hair is slightly mussed and there is the rigid air about him of a man who is holding himself together by invisible wires.

90-F. ANOTHER ANGLE

Norman mounts the stage to Esther.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/7/53
81B.

90F (Cont.)

NORMAN:

Congratulations, my dear... got here just in time, didn't I?

(he kisses her lightly on the forehead)

May I borrow the end of your speech to make a little speech of my own?

Esther cannot speak or take her eyes off Norman. There is a horrified silence from out front.

NORMAN:

My method for gaining your attention is a little unusual perhaps, but hard times call for harsh measures.

(he takes a handkerchief from his breast pocket and wipes his lips)

Had my speech all prepared -- seems to have gone right out of my mind for the moment. Let me see...

(he laughs)

Silly to be so formal, isn't it? I know almost all of you sitting out there by your first names, don't I? Made a lot of money for you gentlemen through the years, haven't I? Well, I need a job now! That's it! That's the speech! Gentlemen -- I need a job. That's what I wanted to say -- I need a job. Simple as that -- the whole speech. I need a job. That's all. My talents are not strictly confined to dramatic parts -- I can do comedy as well. Play something, boys.

He gestures drunkenly to the orchestra in back of him, and inadvertently his hand strikes Esther sharply across the face. He stares at her wildly, his eyes not focusing, and begins to sway slightly. He is beginning to come apart.

ESTHER:

(quietly)

Norman, darling --

He makes no effort to resist as she pilots him from the stage. The M.C. comes on quickly and signals to the orchestra. It begins to play.

90G. ANGLE ON FLOOR (MUSIC)

NEW
SCENE

Esther pilots Norman through the shocked crowd to her table.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/7/53
81C.

90H. CLOSE ANGLE AT TABLE (MUSIC)

NEW
SCENE

The men rise as Esther arrives with Norman.

OLIVER:

(as casually as possible) .

Hello, Norman. Sit down.

NORMAN:

(thickly)

Hi'ya, Oliver...

Oliver pulls out a chair for Norman who almost collapses into it. He sits there dully as Danny helps Esther into her chair. The Oscar she carries seems to be forgotten until the elderly lady friend of Oliver's leans over to Esther and makes a valiant effort to relieve the awkwardness of the moment.

ELDERLY LADY:

Let me congratulate you, my dear.

ESTHER:

(very low)

Thank you...

Norman's hands go over his eyes, a realization of what he has done beginning to come over him.

NORMAN:

Somebody give me a drink...please.

DISSOLVE TO:

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
3/4/54
81-D.

90-1. INT. STAGE THE LONG-FACE NUMBER SET

The crew is getting ready to shoot the number, the director calling out final instructions.

NEW SCENE
DIRECTOR:
All right, roll the boom in, boys, and let's take it!

ASST. DIRECTOR:
Places everybody!

DIRECTOR:
(looking up at rain pipe)
Ready with that rain up there?

SPECIAL EFFECTS MAN:
Ready, sir.

DIRECTOR:
(nodding)
Haul it up. I'll give you your cue.
(looks off)
All right, Vicki, we're ready.

Esther comes into the scene. She is pale and her eyes lack luster. The director looks at her sharply, but all he says is:

DIRECTOR:
From the beginning, dear.

Esther takes her place, but it is apparent that her heart is not in her work.

DIRECTOR:
Roll 'em!

ASST. DIRECTOR:
Quiet everybody!
(the bell rings)

SOUND MAN:
Speed.

DIRECTOR:
Playback!

The MUSIC starts. Esther-the-trouper comes to life, but Esther-the-woman is still not all there. However, for about four bars she does very well, then her timing goes off.

DIRECTOR:
Hold it! Cut!

The music stops - everything stops.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
3/4/54
81-E.

90-1 (Cont.)

DIRECTOR:
(to Esther)
You were out of sync, honey.
(Esther knows it and just
nods; to everybody)
All right, let's go again!

ASST. DIRECTOR:
Starting places!

All hurry to their first positions as the director walks over to Esther.

90-j. CLOSE ANGLE ESTHER

as the director comes up to her.

DIRECTOR:
You all right, Vicki?

ESTHER:
Yes, I'm fine -- I'm all right.

DIRECTOR:
Sure you don't want anything?

ESTHER:
No really, I'm fine.

ASST. DIRECTOR'S VOICE:
Ready, Mr. Harvey.

The director pats Vicki on the shoulder encouragingly and leaves.

0-k. LONGER ANGLE

as the Asst. Director calls out, "Quiet!".

DIRECTOR:
Roll 'em!
(the bell rings)

SOUND MAN:
Speed.

DIRECTOR:
Playback!

This time the number goes along fine for eight bars, when suddenly the rain starts with a swoosh!

DIRECTOR:
Stop! Cut! Hold it!... Too soon with that rain! I told you I'd give you the cue, now watch it!

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
3/4/54
81-F.

90-k (Cont.)

DIRECTOR: (Cont.)
(to others)
All right, mop it up and let's go again!

As three or four men start mopping up the water, the director walks over to Esther.

DIRECTOR:
'Take a rest, honey, it'll be about five minutes.

Esther smiles her thanks and goes to her dressing room. The director looks after her, worried.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
12/7/53
82.

91. A SOUND STAGE AT THE NILES STUDIO

AS IN
SCRIPT

A Musical Number not quite discernible through the clutter of camera crew and stagehands, is being shot. The director shouts, "Cut" and the people begin to disperse, Esther among them. She walks to the far side of the stage away from the musical number set so it is not tied in to following scene and is immediately set upon by a makeup man and a hairdresser who begin the usual fussing over her face and hair. She submits silently, staring straight ahead, seemingly unaware of them. Oliver Niles appears out of the darkness and tiptoeing behind her chair, kisses her gently.

ESTHER:

Oliver! You're back! I've missed you -- three months is a long time! Have a nice trip?

OLIVER:

Not exactly the pleasure trip it used to be --

(he laughs)

But they want your pictures, Esther -- all across the country. That's all I kept hearing.

ESTHER:

Thanks.

(she suddenly pushes up her hands and shoves the hairdresser and makeup man away)

Let me alone for a minute!... Get away and let me be! Let me alone!

The hairdresser and makeup man retreat, hastily.

OLIVER:

(after a moment)

Tough day?

ESTHER:

No tougher than any other day.

She turns away and fishes for a handkerchief in her pocket.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
83.

91 (Cont.)

OLIVER:

Maybe you ought to get away after this one --
New York or Europe. Just get completely away.
What about that?

There is no answer from Esther.

OLIVER:

(casually)

Norman all right?

Again no answer. She nods slowly -- not looking up.

OLIVER:

Has he been -- is he --?

ESTHER:

He's gone to a sanatorium. He's trying awfully
hard, Oliver. He really wants to stop drinking --
I know he does - but -- what is it, Oliver?
Why does he destroy himself -- day by day --
you've known him longer than anyone -- what is it?
Tell me, Oliver -- no matter what it is -- tell me!

OLIVER:

(he shakes his head)

Don't you think I've tried through the years to
know why -- to help him? I don't know what the
answer is.

ESTHER:

(grimly)

I've got to find the answer, Oliver. I can't live
this way! Do you know what it's like to see some-
one you love crumbling away before your eyes - bit
by bit - day by day? To stand there helpless?

(she takes a deep breath)

And love isn't enough -- I know that now, I thought
I was the answer for Norman -- but love isn't
enough! It isn't enough for him - and - I'm afraid
of what I feel now - in myself. Sometimes I hate
him - I hate his promises to stop -- and the watch-
ing and the waiting to see it begin again - I hate
to go home at night - to listen to the lies -- to
have him kiss me - and my heart goes out to him
because he tries -- he tries -- and I hate him be-
cause he fails - and because I've failed -- I've
failed too! What's going to happen to us, Oliver?
No matter how much you love someone -- how do you
live out the days? How? How?

She pounds the arms of the chair with her two fists, as though
it were a kind of physical release.

OLIVER:

(he takes her hand in his)

Would it help some if he went to work again?

ESTHER:

Oliver -- could you -- could you do that?

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
3/4/54
84.

91 (Cont.1)

OLIVER:

I'll try.

She goes into his arms, embracing him for her thanks. A man's voice calls out. "Miss Lester! We're ready, Miss Lester!" Immediately the hairdresser and the makeup man glide in from nowhere, and stand waiting.

ESTHER:

All right, fix it, boys -- I've mussed it all up. Be careful how you do it, Oliver -- all he's got left is his pride.

She wipes the tears away from her eyes, and walks toward the two men - then her makeup fixed, she walks over to the set and the musical number, "Go Lose That Long Face" begins.

When Esther leaves Oliver the hopelessness has gone out of her.

91-A. THE SET

Esther comes from her dressing room with new spring in her walk and sparkle in her eye, and as she takes her place, it is clear to the director, and everyone else for that matter, that the old Vicki Lester is with them once more.

DIRECTOR:

All right, Vicki, right from the top again!... Roll 'em!

SOUND MAN:

Speed.

DIRECTOR:

Go!

The playback plays and Vicki does the number with a spirit born of the new hope that Oliver has given her for the man she loves.

DISSOLVE TO:

2. THE EXTERIOR OF A THREE-STORY FRAME HOUSE

It has a well-kept, though old-fashioned look, and it is set apart from the other houses nearby.

Oliver Niles, carrying a briefcase, is walking up the steps of the porch. He rings the bell and waits. Suddenly his eye is caught by the wire mesh over the door-pane and his eyes sweep the other windows of the place, all of which have the wire mesh over them.

The door is opened by a rather secretarial looking woman of somewhat uncertain age.

"A STAR IS BORN"

CHANGE
3/4/54
84-A.

92 (Cont.)

READY
SHOT!

OLIVER:

I'm Mr. Niles.

THE WOMAN:

Oh, yes. Come in, please.

Oliver follows her into what seems to be an office off the hall, and is immediately greeted by a jovial and rather hearty man in his sixties.

THE MAN:

Hello, Mr. Niles. We're expecting you.
My name is Harrison.

OLIVER:

How do you do.

THE MAN:

Come into the reception room and make
yourself comfortable, Mr. Niles. I'll
have Mr. Maine brought down.

He smiles jovially at Oliver and goes out. Oliver remains standing and looks around the room. There is a billiard table in one corner and a rather battered upright piano in another. Oliver shakes his head and gives a deep sigh, as the door opens and Norman enters. He looks ill and shaken. He is followed by a burly attendant in a white coat.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
85.

92 (Cont.)

NORMAN:

Hello, Oliver. Welcome to Liberty Hall.

OLIVER:

(making a bad effort to be casual)

Hello, Norman.

(they shake hands)

NORMAN:

Let's go along out to the sun porch. It's a little cozier than this.

He walks out of the room to the sun porch adjoining it, the attendant only a step behind him, and Oliver following.

NORMAN:

(patting the sofa beside him)

Sit here, Oliver.

(he smiles)

You don't have to worry about Napoleon or Julius Ceaser strolling in. This isn't that kind of place at all.

(as he sees the attendant watching to see that Niles doesn't slip anything to him)

No, Mr. Niles isn't slipping me a case of Scotch, Cuddles. He's just going to sit next to me.

(to Oliver, indicating the attendant)

This is Cuddles, my social secretary. We go everywhere together.

OLIVER:

How are you feeling, Norman?

NORMAN:

(heartily)

Fine. Getting along remarkably, Cuddles tells me. He says you ought to see some of the boys.

(he gives an expressive whistle, then becomes aware that they are still standing)

Well, let's sit down.

(as they sit)

Cuddles, we really don't need you.

Cuddles smiles grimly, shakes his head, and sits down near them.

NORMAN:

Touching, isn't it? Can't bear to have me out of his sight.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
10/16/53
86.

92 (Cont.1)

OLIVER:
(anything for conversation)
Are you comfortable here?

NORMAN:
Comfortable! It's positively luxurious. Why, they even have iron bars in the windows to keep out the drafts.

OLIVER:
How much longer are you going to be here, Norman?

NORMAN:
Well, I'm really cured now. I'm just staying an extra week or so, to get in good shape. After all --
(with a bitter laugh)
--there isn't any particular hurry to -- er -- return to the cameras.

OLIVER:
(opens briefcase and takes out script)
Well, that's what I wanted to talk to you about. I've got a script here that -- er -- has a fine part for you in it.

NORMAN:
(really delighted)
Oh, that's great, Oliver.
(always the actor)
Who plays opposite me?
(takes script from Oliver)

OLIVER:
(floundering)
Well, it's not exactly the lead - young Pemberton's doing that, but I'll tell you frankly, I consider your part better than the lead.

NORMAN:
I see. Better than the lead.

OLIVER:
(hurriedly)
Of course, it isn't terribly long -- but it's one of those parts that make an impression. They'll be thinking about you all through the picture.

Norman realizes that Niles' offer is made out of pity.

NORMAN:
(with bravado)
Well, the thing is, Oliver, I'm pretty well set at another studio. I'm not at liberty, at the moment, to tell you just which one. You know yourself how those things are.
(handing back the script)
But it's a big picture -- one of the biggest of the year -- and the part!

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
10/16/53
87.

92 (Cont.2)

NORMAN: (Cont.)

(he raises his eyes and blows a kiss to
the ceiling at the glory of the part)
Why, every actor in Hollywood would give his teeth
to play it.

OLIVER:

(anxious to help him with' this pathetic lie)
That's fine, Norman. Naturally, that'll tie you up
for a while, but we won't get to this for some time
--and perhaps, if you want to consider the part for
later on--
(tentatively extends script again)

NORMAN:

(not taking it)
Well, you'd better not count on me, Oliver. I've
got several pictures lined up after this one--and
then they're talking to me about England. They're
doing some very interesting things over there,
you know, and --

CUDDLES:

(nudging Norman)

Hey.

NORMAN:

What, Cuddles? Speak right out. We all love you.

CUDDLES:

Your dinner.

NORMAN:

Oh, yes.

(to Oliver)

We dine at five-thirty here. It makes the nights
longer.

OLIVER:

(rising)

Well, I'll be running along, Norman...
(tosses script on table as Norman
and Cuddles rise)

Suppose I just leave this with you anyway...
(grins)

Maybe you'll be able to give me some ideas, even if
you won't play the part.

NORMAN:

(playing up)

Sure, Oliver...

OLIVER:

(giving Norman a pat on the shoulder
as he turns away)

Glad to see you're getting along so well.

NORMAN:

(cheerily)

Oh, I'll be out in no time.

(continues as he and Cuddles follow
Oliver back through reception room)

(CONTINUED)

BUSINESS
DED

DIALOGUE
BUSINESS

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
88.

92 (Cont.3)

NORMAN: (Cont.)

I'll have to introduce myself all over again to a lot of people. They won't know me when I'm not drinking.

As Oliver Niles reaches the door. -

NORMAN: (Cont.)

Goodbye, Oliver. Thanks for dropping in.
(as Oliver, with a farewell wave of his hand exits, Norman takes Cuddles' arm)

All right, Cuddles. Alone at last.

DISSOLVE TO:

93. LONG SHOTS ESTABLISHING SANTA ANITA RACETRACK & GRANDSTAND

PICTORIAL SHOTS OF THE TRACK
THE HORSES AT THE POST
THE START OF A RACE ACCOMPANIED BY A ROAR
FROM THE CROWD: "THEY'RE OFF!" Etc.

94. INT. CLUBHOUSE BAR

Only a few people at the bar and the small tables. Outside we still HEAR the crowd CHEERING the start of the race. Norman enters, completely sober. He looks pale and there is a faintly seedy air about him. As he passes a table where there are two men and a woman, he pauses.

NORMAN:

(cordially)

Hello, there, Sam -- h'lo, Bert. How are you, Marian?

SAM:

(coolly)

Oh, hello.

They are all slightly uneasy at this public acknowledgment that Norman is an acquaintance. Bert merely nods. The girl gives him an automatic smile and turns away. They do not cut him, but they make it clear that they do not wish him to join them.

95. CLOSE SHOT AT BAR

The bartender looks up as Norman approaches the bar.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
89.

95 (Cont.)

BARTENDER:
(a little uneasy)
Hello, Mr. Maine. Haven't seen you in a long time.

NORMAN:
No... I -- I've --
(an attempt at jauntiness)
-- been resting. Ginger ale, please.

BARTENDER:
(taking it for granted)
Ginger ale and what?

NORMAN:
(firmly)
Ginger ale and ginger ale.

BARTENDER:
(agreeably)
A new leaf?

NORMAN:
(with a sweeping gesture)
A whole new book.
(taking the ginger ale)
Thanks.

As he drinks a few other people drift into the bar -- among them Libby, a little tight. He comes up for a drink and, without seeing Norman, stands next to him.

LIBBY:
(to the bartender)
Scotch, please.

NORMAN:
(turning, glad to see a friend)
Hello, Libby. Haven't seen you in a long time.
What do you like in the third race?

LIBBY:
(in exaggerated surprise; he is a little truculent from liquor)
Why, it's Mr. America of yesteryear.
(looking pointedly into space beyond Norman)
Do they let you wander around now without a keeper?

During the above speech we have heard the cheers from outside which signify that the race is over -- and more people come into the bar. Libby gets his drink and takes a big swallow.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
90.

95 (Cont.1)

NORMAN:

(trying to pass off Libby's remark,
indicating his ginger ale)

Oh, I'm a trusty now.

LIBBY:

(taking a drink)

I suppose you'll be here all the time, now that
you've retired from the hurly-burly of the
silver screen.

(to the bartender)

Another Scotch.

NORMAN:

Well, we're staying down at Mailbu now, and it's
pretty lonesome with Esther away working all
day.

LIBBY:

(starting the new drink)

I wouldn't squawk about that if I were you.
It's nice somebody in the family's making a
living.

NORMAN:

(astonished, more than angry)

Say, go a little slow, Libby, I don't want to
forget we're friends.

LIBBY:

(scornfully)

Friends, my eye! Listen, I got you out of your
jams because it was my job -- not because I
was your "friend". I don't like you. I never
did like you. Nothing made me happier than to
see all those cute little pranks of yours catch
up with you and land you on your celebrated
face.

NORMAN:

(with sardonic bitterness)

Pretty work, Libby -- always wait till they're
down -- then kick 'em.

LIBBY:

Say, listen. You've fixed yourself nice and
comfortable. You can live off your wife now.
You've got no complaints.

Norman swings at him and hits him, but Libby does not go
down. He gives Norman a terrific sock and Norman crashes
to the floor. There is great commotion.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
91.

96. CLOSE SHOT NORMAN

Lying on the floor. There is nothing comic in his figure. Rather, he is pitiful and really physically hurt. A crowd has gathered around and we hear their comments:

VOICES:

Why, it's Norman Maine....

He's drunk again.....

He's been drunk for years.....

How does Vicki Lester stand him, anyway?....

I guess she's sorry for him.....

There is a chorus of laughter from the dispersing bystanders as Libby exits in another direction. The sound of the bugle OFFSCENE signals the next race. A young man turns to the girl with him:

YOUNG MAN:

Come on, honey, or we'll miss the next race.

The crowd all pass out of the room. Norman, shaken, brushes himself off, picks up his hat and walks painfully over to the bar.

NORMAN:

(bitterly -- to the bartender)
Give me a Scotch -- double!

As the bartender reaches for the bottle -

DISSOLVE TO:

97. INT. ESTHER'S AND NORMAN'S HOUSE AT MALIBU NIGHT

The curtains on the tall French windows are drawn.

Esther is pacing up and down restlessly. She looks unhappy and worried. Niles is watching her anxiously. He also looks tired and strained.

OLIVER:

Esther, you'll be ill. Why don't you try and get a little sleep?

ESTHER:

(almost losing control)
He's been gone four days -- four days and not a word!

The telephone rings. Esther starts for it eagerly. As she reaches the telephone, however, she loses her nerve.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
92.

97. (Cont.)

ESTHER:
(unable to answer it)
Oliver, I can't! I just can't.

Niles comes over, pulls himself together and picks up the telephone, while Esther stands listening tensely.

OLIVER:
Hello -- No. This is Oliver Niles speaking --
What? Oh, thank heaven! Where? In the night
court!

He hangs up...They face one another. There is a moment's pause.

OLIVER:
(reassuringly)
He's all right, Esther. He isn't hurt. I'll
go right down and get him out.

He starts toward the door.

ESTHER:
What is it -- What's wrong?

Niles stops, turns, and answers reluctantly.

OLIVER:
He's been arrested on a -- drunk charge.

ESTHER:
(quietly and firmly)
I'm going with you.

She rushes over to the door, too.

OLIVER:
Esther, please. It isn't any place for you.
And if it gets in the papers --

ESTHER:
(vehemently)
What do I care about that now?

As she runs out of the door and Oliver Niles follows -

DISSOLVE TO:

98. INT. COURTROOM

The lights are on, but the first glow of dawn is coming through the windows. There is a sprinkling of spectators and the clerks are at their desks. Esther sits alone, down near the front. Court is about to convene. Niles comes hastily in from the rear entrance and takes the next seat to Esther.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
93.

99. ESTHER AND OLIVER NILES

Esther looks at Niles questioningly and hopefully.

ESTHER:

Were you able to do anything?

OLIVER:

(in a low voice)

The Judge says he'll have as fair treatment as anybody else -- and that's all he'll say.

As the Judge, a youngish, fine-faced man, enters, the bailiff raps on a table. Everybody rises. He goes to the Bar.

BAILIFF:

Division 30, Municipal Court, County of Los Angeles, is now in session. Honorable George J. Barris presiding. Be seated, please.

The Judge glances through the cases on his desk. The bailiff goes over to him.

BAILIFF:

Ready, Your Honor.

The Judge goes over to the doorway to his left and enters the room, leaving the door open. We follow CAMERA to room as he gets up on a chair. The room is filled with perhaps fifty prisoners, in all stages of drunkenness and torturing hangovers. Most of them are dirty, ragged derelicts. Among them is Norman, looking up at the Judge. He has a two-day growth of beard, his shirt is torn, his collar is open, and he has no necktie. He seems beaten and dazed. His hands are shaky, his face is twitching.

JUDGE:

I want to advise you that you are entitled to be represented by counsel; to be confronted by the witnesses that may testify against you; to a public and speedy trial by the Court or by a jury; and the right to be admitted to bail.

He gets down from the chair.

As the Judge re-enters the courtroom.

JUDGE:

(to the bailiff)

First five defendants.

He mounts the bench. The bailiff brings in the first five men and seats them on a row of chairs. In the middle is Norman. He sits and stares dazedly at the floor.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
94.

100. ESTHER AND OLIVER NILES

Esther stares at Norman with wide, tragic eyes. Oliver looks at him, then sorrowfully turns his gaze away.

101. BAR

JUDGE:
(consulting record)
William Gregory.

The bailiff motions for Gregory, a typical derelict, to get up and stand by the Bar. Gregory is nursing the world's worst hangover.

CLERK:
(reading charge)
Plain drunk. Picked up at Fifth and Towne asleep in the gutter. Fourteen similar offenses in the past six months.

JUDGE:
How do you plead?

GREGORY:
I don't feel so well.

JUDGE:
I didn't ask you how you feel -- I said how do you plead.

GREGORY:
Guilty, I guess.

JUDGE:
When did you get out the last time?

GREGORY:
Just before Christmas.

JUDGE:
I'm sorry that you'll have to miss New Year's, but you'll get out in time for Washington's Birthday. Sixty days.

(he makes a notation on his charge slips as the bailiff ushers Gregory out)
Milton Rails.

Rails, a mere kid with a bandaged head, comes unsteadily up to the bar.

CLERK:
(reading charge)
Plain drunk. Picked up on Brooklyn Avenue. Given treatment at Receiving Hospital, then removed to
12.1

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

CHANGE
10/26/53
95.

101 (Cont.)

JUDGE:

How old are you?

RAILS:

Eighteen.

DIALOGUE
CHANGE

JUDGE:

Did you take a good look at those men in the cell with you last night?

RAILS:

(shuddering at the memory)

Yes, sir.

JUDGE:

Have you taken a good look at yourself this morning?

RAILS:

No, sir.

JUDGE:

I suggest that you do. Five dollars or two days.

(the boy starts dispiritedly out)

Sentence suspended.

Rails turns around and directs a look of heartfelt gratitude at the Judge as the bailiff steers him out. The Judge glances at his records.

JUDGE:

Ernest Gubbins -- more commonly known as Norman Maine.

Norman rises and walks painfully to the Bar. The Judge looks at him intently.

CLERK:

(reading charge)

Drunk and disorderly. Crashed car into tree at Sunset and Coronado. Evidently been drinking for days. Resisted arrest and injured one of the arresting officers.

JUDGE:

How do you plead?

NORMAN:

(head down)

Guilty.

JUDGE:

Were you Norman Maine, the actor?

Norman nods.

101 (Cont.1)

JUDGE:

(sternly)

You've come pretty low, haven't you? There isn't a man here who's had the advantages you've had. And look what you've done with them. You're nothing but an irresponsible drunk, driving about the streets with the power to inflict death or injury on innocent people. I think we'd better deny you that power for a while. Ninety days in the City Jail.

Norman turns numbly away as the bailiff takes his arm.

102. ESTHER

As she rises and walks quickly up to the bench. All eyes in the courtroom focus on her. The Judge looks up.

103. NORMAN

As he sees her.

104. GROUP SHOT

Esther gives Norman one quick glance, then turns to the Judge.

ESTHER:

I'm his wife.

JUDGE:

Yes, I recognize you, Miss Lester.

ESTHER:

Please, I promise, Judge, this will never happen again. I'll be responsible for him, if you'll just --

(almost breaking)

-- not send him there.

JUDGE:

Do you realize that this man, when drunk, is obviously a menace to public safety?

(Esther nods her head
without speaking)

Do you realize, too, the responsibility you would be assuming to the Court and to the Commonwealth?

Esther, who has been looking at the ground, raises her head slowly, looks him in the eye and speaks very quietly, almost with tears in her eyes.

104 (Cont.)

ESTHER:

I do.

JUDGE:

(after looking at her piercingly
for a moment - to clerk)

Sentence suspended. Prisoner remanded to custody
of wife.

(makes notation, consults records)

Jose Rodriguez.

BAILIFF:

(to Esther as he starts
Norman out)

You can get him at the jail entrance, Madame.

Niles comes forward and takes Esther's arm. She starts
blindly out. Over their exit we hear:

JUDGE'S VOICE:

How do you plead?

RODRIGUEZ' VOICE:

(Mexican accent)

Guilty, Your Honor.

CLERK'S VOICE:

Plain drunk. Picked up at --

DISSOLVE TO:

105. EXT. JAIL

Four or five trusties are mopping up the jail steps. Across
the street are the shacks of the bail bond brokers. On
their shabby fronts are Christmas wreaths and signs saying
"MERRY XMAS" and "HAPPY NEW YEAR". Three or four loiterers
are on the street in front of the jail.

106. EXT. JAIL

Dawn is just breaking as Norman comes unsteadily out and
starts down the steps. Esther runs up to him and takes his
arm. He is still in a daze.

NORMAN:

(weakly)

I'm so -- tired, Esther.

They take a few steps further, and suddenly, from nowhere,
appear two men with notebooks and three or four photographers.
The photographers carry speed-graphic cameras with synchron-
ized flashlight bulbs, which they focus on Norman and Esther,
who shrink back -- and amid a babble of questions from the
reporters, as the bulbs and the cameras flash, we --

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
98.

107. INT. MALIBU LIVING ROOM AT DOOR TO NORMAN'S BEDROOM

Near the door is a lighted Christmas tree. Esther is just coming out. She very gently closes the door behind her, but the lock does not catch and as she stands there a moment it swings open a few inches.

ESTHER:

(softly)

He's still asleep. He's been sleeping nearly all day.

OLIVER:

That's the best thing for him.

ESTHER:

He looks so helpless, lying there -- he's smiling in his sleep -- like a child.

CAMERA SWINGS past Esther to the slightly open door to Norman's room as she says this -

108. INT. NORMAN'S DARKENED ROOM CLOSE SHOT NORMAN IN BED

The shades in the room are drawn and the only light is a shaft across Norman's face from the open door. Norman slowly opens his eyes.

OLIVER'S VOICE:

(very gently)

Do you still love him, Esther -- or do you feel sorry for him?

ESTHER:

It's all mixed up, Oliver -- love -- pity -- I can't tell where one leaves off and the other begins. And it doesn't matter now. I only know that all I can do is to stay with him and help him.

OLIVER:

We'll take care of him between us, Esther.

ESTHER:

You're very fond of him, aren't you, Oliver?

OLIVER:

I'm very fond of -- both of you.

ESTHER:

Then I know you'll understand what I have to tell you. And I think after what happened last night you already know what it is.

(slowly)

I can't do any more pictures. I'm going away -- for good -- with Norman.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
99.

108. (Cont.)

A pause - then:

OLIVER:

(quietly)

You're at the height of your career, Esther --
the very peak of your success.

ESTHER:

There wouldn't have been any career without
Norman. I'm just returning the gift he gave me.

OLIVER:

(gently)

No one can "give" anyone a career, Esther --
you've made your own.

ESTHER:

(stubbornly)

Norman gave it to me -- by his faith -- by his
love -- and it's nothing without him -- not the
way things are.

OLIVER:

You've thought this through, Esther? You're sure
you're right? What will you do?

ESTHER:

Go away together. Be with him every moment.
Perhaps if I had been able to be with him more,
some of this wouldn't have happened. That's the
only thing I've got to hang on to -- I've got
to believe that! Then when he's better, we'll go
to England -- or Italy. They make pictures
there -- and they won't know about him the way
they do here. At least, he'd have a chance to
start over again. That's what he needs -- that's
what I'm willing to fight for -- to give up
anything for!

Oliver looks at her for a long moment -- then:

OLIVER:

Esther -- I have to tell you this -- I hate to,
but I must. There's nothing left any more. It
happened long before last night -- long before
we let him out at the studio. Twenty years of
quiet and steady drinking do something to a
man. Long before it showed in his face, it
showed in his acting. Little by little -- more
and more with each picture. That's why he
slipped -- it wasn't just poor pictures --
it was him -- and there's nothing left any
more. Just a shell of what he once was. It's
gone, Esther. For good.

108 (Cont.1)

In the bedroom, Norman presses his palms to his eyes, and lies shaken with pain.

ESTHER:

(passionately)

I don't believe you, Oliver! I mustn't! I won't!
Can you honestly tell me I'm wrong to do this?
To try? To try? To take this last chance?

OLIVER:

(after a pause)

No, Esther. I can't honestly tell you that.

ESTHER:

(simply)

Then it's settled, Oliver?

OLIVER:

(he takes Esther's hand and

speaks with attempted lightness)

It's settled. I'll arrange it. Goodbye,
Vickie Lester.

(softly)

And good luck, Mrs. Norman Maine.

ESTHER:

Goodbye, Oliver -- and thank you.

He goes out, and Esther watches after him for a moment. Then she walks to the sofa and sinks down upon it, her head going down into her arm, as if to blot out the picture Oliver has painted.

The doorway to the bedroom opens, and Norman appears. He comes out, a bathrobe over his bathing suit, walking with a tired shuffle, then stops and looks at her.

For a moment, his shoulders droop, and his mouth goes awry. Then he literally seems to pull himself together and by a supreme effort, to become another man -- the gay debonair fellow of the Shrine Auditorium.

He walks over to the sofa and stands grinning down at her.

NORMAN:

Come out, come out, wherever you are!

ESTHER:

Norman! You're up!

NORMAN:

Well, if just being erect creates such a sensation, I'll never lie down again.

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
101.

108 (Cont.2)

ESTHER:

How do you feel?

NORMAN:

Great! Fit as a fiddle and ready for love! Though why being fit as a fiddle should make you ready for love, I've never understood. How did they know a fiddle was fit in the first place?

ESTHER:

(laughing)

Oh, no! Please! Not the superstition routine again! Can I do anything for you, darling? Get you anything?

NORMAN:

Yes. A number of things.

ESTHER:

(gayly)

Name 'em, professor!

NORMAN:

Brace yourself. I've decided we're dreary people.

ESTHER:

Us?

NORMAN:

Both of us. And I'd like some changes made around this house.

ESTHER:

When did you decide all this?

NORMAN:

Never you mind. Just listen. First, I'm going in for the athletic stuff. The swim before breakfast. The swim before dinner. The happy mind, the happy body. Beginning now. Want to come along?

ESTHER:

Must I?

NORMAN:

No. Your part starts after I come out. I'd like some hot soup and sandwiches, but the thing I'd like more than anything else is --

He pauses and smiles at her.

ESTHER:

Yes?

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
102.

108 (Cont.3)

NORMAN:

I'd like some singing around the house -- used to have it all the time. Do I still have the copy-right?

ESTHER:

(smiling)

Including the Scandinavian. You want it now?

NORMAN:

Uh-huh.

ESTHER:

Okay. Go ahead and have your swim. I'll open the kitchen window so you can hear me.

She starts out.

NORMAN:

Hey --!

She stops and turns toward him questioningly.

NORMAN:

Start it in here -- special request of the copy-right owner.

ESTHER:

(laughing)

That copyright owner's getting mighty fussy!

But she starts to softly sing, "It's a New World". He smiles tenderly at her and takes a long, lingering look -- then he wheels and goes out to the beach, closing the door behind him.

DISSOLVE TO:

109. THE BEACH

As he walks toward the ocean, Esther's voice floats out to him. He wavers for an instant, then walks determinedly on. Slowly, the texture of the singing changes -- as he reaches the water's edge, it echoes and re-echoes as it did in the half-finished house, and as he steps into the water, it becomes a cacophonous jumble of sound.

The CAMERA watches him swimming out toward the sunset -- then comes back to his bathrobe on the beach. The water gently creeps around it -- then the waves sweep over it and pull it into the ocean.

FADE OUT.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
103.

FADE IN

110. PUBLICITY OFFICES IN THE NILES STUDIO

Matt Libby's office is jammed. His staff hurries in and out of it and along the corridor, bearing telegrams and bits of teletype messages.

The floor of the office is strewn with newspapers as is Libby's desk and even his chair -- all with black banner headlines.

NORMAN MAINE'S BODY FOUND OFF MALIBU
EX-STAR PERISHES IN TRAGIC ACCIDENT.

Libby himself is behind the desk talking into two telephones at once, and issuing instructions to his staff at the same time as they hurry in and out of the office.

LIBBY:

(into one telephone)

Yes, tragic -- tragic. Just an accident. We had big plans for him, too. - All set for a comeback.

(into the other telephone)

Yes, sad, sad. Great personal loss to everyone. No, no exclusive on Miss Lester. She can't see anyone, anyhow.

(to the group before his desk)

Herald-Express wants a front-page layout --All the old stills you can find. Hop on it!

(into telephone)

Yes, I can rush you fifteen-hundred words. Thanks. Yes, very sad.

(to Miss Markhem)

Hold off on the church Services till I call you!

(into the other phone)

Right outside the house. Okay. Pictures of the beach and the home. Yes, very sad. Thanks.

(to another group in front of desk)

Clear out! I've got a lot to do. Miss Wheeler - you stay.

As they hurry out, Libby picks up a bottle of coca-cola from the desk, and takes a long, hungry swig of it. As he puts it down, he picks up one of the newspapers on his chair and takes a slow deliberate look at the large picture of Maine splashed across the front page. A smile flickers across the corners of his mouth.

LIBBY:

This is the way the world ends -- not with a bang-- with a whimper.

(he smiles quite openly)

T. S. Eliot, Miss Wheeler. All right, get your book out.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
104.

110 (Cont.)

He takes another swig from the coca-cola bottle.

DISSOLVE TO:

111. EXT. CHURCH

Cars for the funeral procession are at the curb. Crowds are gathered on either side of the entrance and police are keeping them back. Cameramen have set up still cameras wherever possible. The pallbearers are bringing the flower-blanketed coffin out to the hearse.

112. AT CHURCH DOOR A SIDE DOOR

so that the funeral party can escape the crowds in front of the church.

Esther, heavily veiled, supported on one side by Oliver Niles and on the other by Danny McGuire, emerges from the church and starts down the steps.

The crowds behind the police line. There is a great quickening of interest as some of the crowd discover the ruse, and breaks around to the side door. There are cries first of:

"Here she is now."
"Aw, you can't see her face."
"Oh, I'll bet she feels terrible."

A mother holds her three-years-old child up so it can see better.

MOTHER:

There she is, dear. That's Vickie. The one in black.

The crowd, meantime, is surging forward, despite the protests of those in the front.

ONE MAN:

(turning)

Hey, stop pushing, can't you?

WOMAN:

(behind him)

I've got as much right to be here as you have.

A third woman pushes another woman in her attempt to get to the front of the line.

WOMAN:

(peering)

What's she got on? I can't see

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
105.

112 (Cont.)

WOMAN:
(who has been pushed)
Well, I'm not stopping you.

WOMAN:
(pushing past her)
You certainly aren't.

The woman breaks through the line and this is a general signal for the whole crowd to surge forward.

Esther is almost at the automobile, as the crowds flow around her.

113. CLOSE SHOT AT ESTHER

as the crowds surround her. Oliver Niles and Danny McGuire try to fend them off unsuccessfully.

There are ad libs from the crowd --

X "Aw, Vickie, let's see your face."
"Put your veil back for just a minute."

One woman has an autograph book.

WOMAN:
(extending it)
Vickie, will you sign my book for me. Write Mrs. Norman Maine.

OLIVER:
(pleading to the woman)
Please!

ANOTHER WOMAN:
(soothingly)
X Don't you care, Vickie. You'll get over this.

ANOTHER WOMAN:
X Don't cry, dearie. He wasn't so much.

DANNY:
(trying to push her off)
Keep away, can't you?

The crowd is closing in, in the back.

MAN:
X Aw, turn around, can't you, Vickie.

WOMAN:
(tearing at her veil)
X Yeah, give us just one look.

Suddenly Esther screams -- in complete hysteria.

FADE OUT:

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
106.

FADE IN:

114. INT. NILES' STUDIO

Oliver Niles and Libby are walking down the studio street, deep in conversation.

LIBBY:

Can't I send out anything on her, Oliver? Is she going to start the new one? Is she going away for a while? What? The papers are on my neck - we better feed 'em something.

OLIVER:

Send out nothing -- those are orders, Libby. Until we know.

LIBBY:

Until we know what?

OLIVER:

(shrugging his shoulders)

Until I can talk to her --until she'll see me. She hasn't answered the 'phone even for me this last week.

The have paused momentarily in front of a row of bungalows and Oliver's eyes go to the nameplate on one of them-- "Norman Maine". Libby's gaze follows Oliver's and they look at the nameplate in silence for a moment.

LIBBY:

That going to stay there?

OLIVER:

As long as I'm head of the studio. You know, Libby, you missed a lot, not knowing Norman Maine.

LIBBY:

Not know him? I spent my life knowing him-- I knew what he was going to do before he did it! I knew him backwards.

OLIVER:

(smiling slightly)

You didn't know him at all, Libby. He was quite a guy.

(he walks off- Libby stands looking after him)

DISSOLVE TO:

115. THE LIVING ROOM AT MALIBU

The lamps are lit, but the room seems empty and desolate. After a moment, a butler emerges from the pantry and looks inquiringly toward the sofa. Esther sits at one end of the sofa, crouched into a corner, her hands lying listlessly in

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
107.

115 (Cont.)

her lap, her eyes staring ahead into nothingness. She looks smaller, and somehow, unkempt, her dressing gown crookedly buttoned and her hair piled unneatly about her head.

THE BUTLER:

Anything I can do for you, Miss Lester, before I go to bed?

ESTHER:

(almost inaudibly -- not looking at him)
No, Charles.

The front doorbell rings, but she seems not to hear it. The butler looks questioningly at her, but she remains staring straight ahead. He sighs, softly, and goes to the door -- then, opens it to admit Danny McGuire.

Danny is in dinner clothes. He mutters a "good evening" to the butler, the while his eyes go quickly and searchingly around the room. He drops his coat on a chair and moves toward Esther, as the butler goes out.

ESTHER:

(hollowly)
'Lo, Danny.
(she tries a smile)

DANNY:

(looking down on her, unsmiling)
You're not dressed.

ESTHER:

Dressed?

DANNY:

You're due at that benefit at the Shrine. Go on and get dressed.

She makes no move -- just shakes her head slowly.

DANNY:

You told 'em you'd be there.

ESTHER:

That was before...

DANNY:

I know it was before -- but come on -- get dressed.

ESTHER:

No.

DANNY:

You just going to sit here? Forever?

(CONTINUED)

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
108.

115(Cont.1)

ESTHER:

(she leaps up - yelling
at the top of her voice)

Yes, forever! Tonight and tomorrow night, and for
as long as I feel like it! I don't want any of
your homemade remedies to pull me out of it!
I know what you're trying to do! Well, the biggest
favor you can do me, is to let me alone -- you
and everybody else! Thanks for the sympathy --
but I don't want it! Yours or anybody's!

She brushes past him and starts out of the room.

DANNY:

Sympathy? That's not what you're getting from
me, baby! You don't deserve it!

His voice is so sharp and cutting that she stops and turns.
He looks at her squarely and hard before he speaks.

DANNY:

You're a great monument to Norman Maine, you are!
He was a drunk, and he wasted his life -- but he
loved you -- and he took enormous pride in the one
thing in his life that wasn't a waste -- you --
his love for you and your success -- that was the
one thing in his life that wasn't a waste. And
he knew it. Maybe he was wrong to do what he
did -- I don't know -- but he didn't want to
destroy that -- destroy the only thing he took
pride in -- and now you're doing the one thing
he was terrified of -- you're wiping it out --
you're tossing aside the one thing he had left --
you're tossing it right back into the ocean after
him. You're the only thing that remains of him
now -- and if you just kick it away, it's like he
never existed. Like there never was a Norman Maine
at all.

ESTHER:

(she looks at him silently for a
long moment, but when she speaks,
her voice is low and controlled)

Wait for me.

(she turns and goes quickly out)

DISSOLVE TO:

116. THE ARC LIGHTS PIERCING THE SKIES

Once again, the beams of light search out the hills of
Hollywood and the city glowing in the darkness beneath them.

"A STAR IS BORN"
FINAL

10/7/53
109.

116(Cont.)

They remain fixed in the sky for a moment -- and then the CAMERA travels down the beam of light to the front of the Shrine Auditorium and the banner covering its facade, proclaiming.

NIGHT OF STARS
HOLLYWOOD'S GALA SHOW FOR HOLLYWOOD'S OWN
MOTION PICTURE RELIEF FUND

DISSOLVE TO:

117. THE TUNNEL UNDERNEATH THE STAGE LEADING TO THE DRESSING ROOMS

The passage is full of people -- showgirls in full regalia, chorus boys, actors and musicians, going to and coming from the stage above.

Esther is coming down the passage, her arm tightly in Danny's, staring straight ahead.

Suddenly as though impelled by some inevitable hidden force, her eyes begin to search the walls. She stops dead in front of a red smudge of lipstick high up on one wall. The initials are blurred beyond recognition -- only the faint outline of a heart and an arrow going through it are dimly discernible.

For a moment she seems about to break. Danny grips her arm in silent understanding. Then she regains control of herself, and starts forward to the iron stairway leading to the stage.

DISSOLVE TO:

118. THE STAGE

A Master of Ceremonies in front of the velvet curtain is speaking.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES:

The next star listed to appear on your program is Miss Vicki Lester, but we are all of us aware of the tragic circumstances which prevent Vicki Lester's appearance here tonight. It is with the deepest sympathy that I....

119. A STAGE MANAGER

He is snapping his fingers at the M.C., and gesticulating wildly from the wings.

(CONTINUED)

119 (Cont.)

MASTER OF CEREMONIES:

Forgive me for just a moment...

He walks quickly to the wings, listens, and then rushes back, his eyes alight with excitement.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES:

Vicki Lester will appear tonight. Ladies and gentlemen, I am proud to present to you, a star that shines bright and high -- ladies and gentlemen, I give you...

But the curtains behind him have parted, and Esther is coming through them to the footlights.

ESTHER:

Mrs. Norman Maine!

She stands there, her hands at her sides, as the applause breaks thunderously over the stage. The orchestra in the pit begins "It's A New World", and the music seems to engulf her. She stands utterly still as the music swells around her, looking out to some distant point of her own!

A FADE OUT.

T H E E N D.